

THE ROLE OF THE PARENT IN THE
SCHOOL READING PROGRAM.

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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THE ROLE OF THE PARENT IN THE
SCHOOL READING PROGRAM

by



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A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Memorial University of Newfoundland

February 1983

St. John's

Newfoundland

Acknowledgements

The writer would like to express his appreciation to all individuals who made this thesis possible. The writer is particularly indebted to Clarissa Hiscock, Language Arts Supervisor with the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board, for her support of the topic in its initial stage. Special recognition must be given to Dr. Frank Wolfe, who was not only instrumental in motivating the writer to begin this thesis, but also for helping to eliminate the greatest obstacle - the selection of the topic - and for supervising the research during the project.

Finally, very special thanks must go to my wife Iris, for her confidence in my ability to complete such a project, and to my four-year-old daughter Angela, for her interest in "Daddy's thesis," and for their unending patience and encouragement for the duration of the thesis writing.

Abstract

A major impetus for this study has been the need to enlighten both parents and teachers with respect to parent involvement in reading, regarded as prerequisite to assessing the feasibility of involving parents locally. To this end this study first surveyed the literature pertaining to parent involvement in children's reading, simply to inform parents and teachers of the extent of activity in this area and to make this information available to them. A second purpose was to identify program features and other aspects of parent involvement that appeared to be effective in improving children's reading. A third purpose of the study was to review the Newfoundland rural educational scene with respect to identifying factors that may be considered facilitative to future activity in this area.

This survey uncovered forty projects that matched the criteria for selection. Identifiable among these are a number of trends related to program planning and implementation. First, the greater number of projects were initiated by university personnel or by university related personnel, although school district and teaching personnel were active as well. Second, the projects most often involved parents in one or more of the following: learning about reading and how to use this knowledge to help children at home; learning about, and how to use, a previously prepared program at home; and learning how to improve the home environment to make it

more conducive to helping children learn to read. Third, these projects involved children and parents of all socioeconomic levels. However, a large percentage of the projects involved low socioeconomic parents and children. Fourth, most projects involved children who were reading below grade level, and in fourteen projects the children involved were receiving remedial instruction. Finally, although most projects were implemented during the school year eight were conducted or implemented during the summer.

An analysis of the projects revealed several important findings. With respect to goals, the greater number of projects aimed to measure children's reading gains attributable to parental involvement. Largely ignored were several other worthwhile goals. With respect to program effectiveness in attaining the goals set forth, twenty-six of the twenty-seven projects that measured children's reading reported reading gains, with twenty of these reporting that reading gains reach significance. Other reported benefits of parental involvement in reading included:

- (1) a positive change in children's attitude toward reading,
- (2) a positive change in children's behavior in class,
- (3) increased amount of reading at home,
- (4) improved parental attitude toward the child, toward reading, and toward participation,

(5) improved teacher attitude toward the child and toward parent participation,

(6) improved relationships between the parent and child and between parents and teachers.

A most interesting finding related to the effect of programs implemented during the summer. Instead of a decrease in their reading level over the summer, as is usually the case, the children whose parents were involved in the summer reading programs began school in the fall reading better than they had been reading at the end of the previous school year.

The recommendations resulting from this study pertaining to future endeavours in the area of parent involvement in children's reading are concerned with improving such observed weaknesses as

- (1) poorly designed studies, many failing to evaluate the effect of parental involvement on children's reading,
- (2) studies whose goals were defined in such narrow terms as measuring reading gains only, and
- (3) a lack of attention to the home environment in terms of ascertaining the presence of factors negatively influencing the effectiveness of parental help in reading.

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CHAPTER I

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Concern of the Newfoundland Department of Education Over Low Reading Levels

The impact of reading on our educational system has been noted since at least 1963, when the Newfoundland Department of Education Newsletter (October 1963) reported that the province had the highest dropout rate in Canada. Since the results of a Departmental survey in reading conducted three years prior to this had revealed that the average Newfoundland pupil was more than a year behind his mainland counterpart, and since research studies conducted in the U.S.A. had conclusively shown a high relationship between achievement in reading and achievement in other school subjects, it was argued that many of the failures in Grade IX, where most of the dropouts occurred, was due largely to the students' inability to read proficiently (Newsletter, November 1963).

Activity of the Curriculum Division to Influence Reading Improvement

The next few years witnessed a frenzy of activity within the Curriculum Division of the Department of Education, testifying to the degree of concern expressed over this reading deficiency. The impetus for this activity appeared

to be that of influencing teachers and administrators with respect to improving the standard of reading among their students. The broad scope of measures undertaken by the Curriculum Division to accomplish this objective may be organized for purposes of description into two divisions: first, the decisions of the Curriculum Division as to what actions it took to help remedy the situation; and second, the results of those decisions, in terms of suggestions and ideas that could be implemented at the classroom level to improve reading. It is worthy of note with respect to the amount of concern generated among Curriculum Division personnel and their intent to influence teachers that the Newsletter, an official departmental publication, carried complete reports of all the above mentioned decisions and their results.

Measures Taken at the Curriculum Division Level

The actions decided upon by Departmental personnel included: 1) a review of research in the area of reading by various officials and subsequent publication of papers suggesting how reading could be improved; 2) periodic reporting of drop-out analyses throughout the province; 3) periodic reports of reading surveys showing correlations between poor reading and results in certain content subjects; 4) a Conference on Reading planned for principals, supervising principals and Departmental inspectors with "Improving Reading through Improved Administration" as its theme, followed by

subsequent publication of papers presented at the conference;

5) meetings at the Department between Departmental officials and school administrators, supervisors, and reading

consultants from the St. John's area; 6) representation of

Curriculum Division personnel at the International Reading

Association annual conferences and publication of excerpts

from papers read at these conferences; 7) formation of an

Elementary Reading Committee with terms of reference to

examine current reading programs to determine the nature and

kind of reading programs that would best meet our needs

following review of the latest research in the field;

8) consideration of the problem by reading specialists and

reading consultants from Central Canada with subsequent

publication of suggestions for improvement; 9) an expansion

of the Curriculum Division to include a reading consultant;

10) adoption of two new reading programs for use throughout

the province; and 11) an extension of the primary reading

program into the elementary grades.

Resulting Suggestions and Ideas for Use at the Classroom Level

Suggestions, inferences and innuendos emanating from

such activity in the hope of transferring concern to the more

effective grass roots agents of improvement in reading

included the following: papers emphasizing livening up the

school library; papers outlining self-evaluation of the

reading program, based upon a guide used in Ontario; papers

on how to improve the developmental reading program through

use of more than the basal reader; papers on teaching reading beyond the primary grades, to the extent that teachers were encouraged to prepare their own reading programs wherever no prescribed program existed; papers on the function and preparation of remedial reading programs with the provision of Readers Digest Skill Builders; a paper on Park Elementary School, San Francisco, which focussed on providing for individual differences in reading with corresponding promotion by levels to replace failure and repeating; papers to enlighten teachers on the function and application of grouping in the classroom for reading to accommodate for the wide range of levels present; a paper describing an Alberta study relating reading improvement to the amount of training among teachers with subsequent calls for a certified teacher in every classroom; and finally, though not conclusively, suggestions that various schools undertake testing programs on reading and that the results, plus the ideas contained in papers published in the Newsletter, be used as topics of discussion in systems' workshops.

Effect of this Activity on Reading

The results of all these efforts, in terms of reading gains, were less than significant. A Departmental survey of reading in June, 1965, involving 1130 Grade VI students showed that more than one half were behind by nine months and that a quarter were two full years behind by the time they entered Grade VII (Newsletter, October, 1965). Another survey

conducted in June, 1970, involving Grade III students, showed that the Newfoundland sample averaged almost a year behind mean performance (Newsletter, April, 1971).

Improvements in the Educational System in Newfoundland and Reading Improvement

Improvements Associated with Consolidation of School Boards

Nor was this reading deficit eliminated in the 1970's, despite the great strides made in improving the educational scene, although the gap has narrowed. In addition to staffing every school with a greater number of certified teachers, for example, the Newfoundland conglomeration of school boards had amalgamated and consolidated to decrease the number drastically, bringing with it improved educational opportunities, including better constructed schools with more and better facilities. School boards were expanding the range of expertise among staff personnel to include language arts supervisors and coordinators; and schools were being staffed with reading specialists, reading consultants and remedial reading teachers.

Educational Achievement Not Necessarily Correlated With the Degree of Resources

With all due respect to improving educational facilities, to expect that these improvements would eliminate the reading problem would be naive. Belief in this cause-effect relationship is the equivalent of saying that educational performance is commensurate with the quantity and

quality of human and material resources. The fallacy of this "industrial concept of education" is illustrated by a true story, which according to Pettit (1981), destroyed two myths pervading education in general today. These two myths are: if more human and material resources are provided -- teachers, teacher aides, audio-visual equipment, reading system -- better outcomes will be achieved; and if a teacher's expertise is increased by more study for higher certification and more specialist or remedial skills are learned, children's learning will improve. The substance of the story is hereby related. When the Director of the Dundee Educational Priority Area project in Scotland, Joyce Watts, asked the teachers of the schools in Dundee, a town of decaying industry and high unemployment, what it was that prevented their teaching successfully, their answers came back -- more staff, more aides, more resources. The project supplied what was requested, but in the end there was no change. The teacher attitudes did not change, the teaching process did not change, and the outcomes did not change (Pettit, 1981).

Effect of these Educational Improvements on Reading

What are the results of similar improvements in human and material facilities, in terms of children's performance in reading, in Newfoundland? The answer to this question is dependent on the reliability of the results of the Newfoundland Department of Education's Standards Testing Program. In December 1976 the Department of Education released a report

on the 1975 Standards Testing Program carried out in October of that year, which revealed that the average Newfoundland student in Grade IV was four months behind the average Canadian student on the Canadian Test of Basic Skills and five months behind in reading. More recently, the results of the 1981 Standards Testing Program released in March 1982, show Grade IV children in Newfoundland to be ten points below the national percentile norm of 50 in reading comprehension and language skills and twenty-one points below the national average in vocabulary. In other words, 71 percent of the students in the national norming group scored as high as or better than Grade IV children in Newfoundland in vocabulary. Furthermore, the results show that in sixteen school board areas of the province test performance for Grade IV students was worse than that in 1978, and in three school board areas the results were the same as those in 1975. Additionally, children in only five school board areas of Newfoundland, out of a total of thirty-five, scored above the national average, in all areas, but especially in reading vocabulary and reading comprehension. These school boards comprise the children of urban centres, and include St. John's Avalon Consolidated School Board, the St. John's Roman Catholic School Board, the Conception Bay Centre School Board, the Conception Bay South School Board and Labrador West School Board. The differences in reading results between the children in these urban areas and the children of rural areas

are extreme. Improvements are forthcoming, but clearly, there is still a long way to go.

Attitude of the Department of Education
Toward Parent Participation in Reading

Exclusion of Parents as a Source of Help

One observation to be made here, with respect to the efforts of the Department of Education, recounted earlier, was that all activity contemplated and instituted was concentrated at the Curriculum Division level with the hope that the concern would filter through to teachers. Another observation, more relevant to the purpose of this study, is that noticeably absent from these efforts was any attempt to involve parents as an agent of improvement in the reading achievement of their children. For example, one official of the Curriculum Division referred to parents only casually while describing the results of the Administrators' Conference on Reading on the topic of dropouts. According to this official, professional educators of the day contended that those children who stayed in school a generation ago did so because they were bright or "their parents were more interested" (Newsletter, January 1965). Since many of those who stayed in school successfully did manage to complete their schooling, parent interest in this context could possibly be considered important. However, the relationship was left unexplored.

Contribution of the Department's Philosophy on
Reading Toward Separating Home and School

More revealing of the Department of Education's attitude toward home help was an exhortation to teachers by another official, in discussing teacher response to the new GILP and YCR reading programs. The official reasoned that perhaps much of the interest and excitement shown by pupils can be attributed to their not seeing stories beforehand, "a practice we must maintain at all cost if our Newfoundland children are to derive full benefit from the element of 'surprise' built into each and every story" (Newsletter, December 1969). This clearly meant that children were not allowed to take their readers home for fear of reading beyond the story being read in class. Such a practice could very well be communicated to parents to mean a "hands off" attitude towards the child's reading and that furthermore, any attempt by the parents to demand that children bring their readers home, which was not inconceivable since children had always brought readers home, could obviously be perceived as a threat to the school's reading program.

Nor was there any relaxation of this attitude several years later when the Curriculum Division responded to what one would assume to be opposition to this practice by parents and teachers. It was suggested to teachers that the child could take the reader home after he had finished it, "to share his success and joy to his parents", (Newsletter, January 1972) to be returned to the school after a few days.

It was admitted that the parents had a "right to know" exactly how the child grew into reading. This kind of attitude toward separating reading from the home environment surely could not have facilitated parent participation in helping children with reading.

Attitudes of Educators in the Past and Parent Participation

Parent Participation Construed as Meddling in Educational Matters

The Curriculum Division and by extension the schools (teachers and administrators) were not unique nor were they the first to communicate such an attitude toward parent participation in their children's education. A similar attitude prevalent among educators in the past construed parent involvement as "poking around in educational matters". Even in the past few years large-scale parent involvement in Newfoundland has evidenced parents using political muscle in placing the needs of their children uppermost in decisions affecting their education, such as conditions of school buildings, the construction of new buildings, and bus transportation. This kind of behavior has been probably more effective in having parents be perceived in a threatening manner than in helping them to be perceived in any other worthwhile role; that is to say, operating within a school or helping to improve their child's achievement in the home.

Attitude of Administrators Influenced
by Fear of Parent Domination

It may be this image of parent potential in school affairs that sometimes alarms educators and contributes to the often biased concept of parent participation apparently held by various educational personnel. For example, to the school administrators, large-scale parent participation in their children's education, especially within the school, may be perceived in terms of the parents eventually "running" the school. Rather, school administrators may prefer the advantage that their professional education and the "we know what's best for your child" attitude gives them over the parent. More often they may prefer to see a change in the family patterns to meet the school and professional concept of what the home ought to be rather than to assume that the school may be incorrect in its model and that parental involvement might require change in the school (Gorton, 1968). Gorton found this to be the situation when he reviewed parent participation in compensatory programs in the U.S.A.

Sometimes, however, administrators may actually prefer parent involvement, but again, because of teacher perceptions of the "encroaching parent", such is impossible. This is the position that some school administrators in Alberta find themselves in, where although parent involvement has been mandated by legislation, the feeling by teachers in many instances that parents already have sufficient involvement in the school and that further intrusion may restrict a teacher's

professional autonomy, places administrators in what Sackney refers to as "a position of dual accountability" (1981).

Attitude of Teachers, Influenced by the Perceived
Negative Aspects of Parent Participation

Fear of restriction on professional autonomy aside, it may appear that next to administrators, teachers themselves have not been particularly keen to recognize the influence parents may bring to the child's education. This consciousness may appear to be shrouded in the many incidents in which parents have been perceived by teachers as the cause of the child's difficulties in school. Some examples would include physical negligence, such as a child coming to school lacking cleanliness, food, and sleep, or emotional negligence, such as a child who lacks the love and affection required for him to think well of himself. These are just two of a multitude of examples, and are included here for purposes of illustration.

An equally pervasive parent-child relationship and one that results in as much teacher frustration as in the previous two examples, involves parents whose attitudes toward school are so blatantly negative that their values are passed on to the child to the extent that negative behavioral characteristics exhibited by the child in school proceed unchecked because the child is quite confident that spontaneous parental support will counter any reaction by the school. Unfortunately, teacher comments to the effect that little can be expected from the child under these circumstances constitute an

unconscious admission of the parent's importance to the child's academic performance and to the success of the school.

In other situations teachers have experienced occasional recognition of parent potential in helping children. These relate to the success of teachers' suggestions to parents; during parent-teacher interviews, with respect to how the parent can help at home. Although teachers have noted that this parental interest is likely temporary and that the suggestions have seemingly been applied for short periods only, they have been heard to respond positively with respect to noticeable improvement in children's attitudes and work habits during these brief periods. Nevertheless, parents' lack of sustained initiative in helping at home are perceived by teachers as a matter of parent apathy. Teachers have consequently been conditioned to expect little positive change in parent involvement as a significant factor in the education of their children.

Attitudes of Parents Toward School
Partially Responsible for a Perceived
Indifference Toward Participation

Misunderstanding of Their Role in the
Education of Their Children

Consequently, for this very reason, low levels of parent participation in helping children read cannot be attributed to administrator and teacher attitude only. A

major obstacle to parent participation may be that not only teachers but also parents themselves do not understand their respective roles in the partnership (Rizer, 1966). The reasons for what teachers perceive as "parental apathy" may well be complex. Misunderstanding of their role for some parents may arise from feelings of intimidation. The parent is sometimes at a disadvantage in the imbalance of power between middle class teachers and lower class parents (DeLone, 1970). In this situation parents may be defensive, afraid that the teacher will discover some further deficiency in their child. Perhaps the only time the school has ever contacted the parent is when the child has created a problem in school. The natural reaction of the parent is to defend the child. This action may result in antagonism between the home and the school (Rizer, 1966). Another reason may be that many parents believe the schools want them to become involved in busy work rather than in evaluating the effectiveness of school affairs. Indeed, most people are apathetic about participating in a given activity unless they feel they can make a contribution (Gorton, 1977).

A Lack of Confidence in Their Ability to Help at Home

A reason more often quoted, that may explain much of the seeming indifference on the part of parents regarding their lack of participation, is that they often feel inadequate with respect to the knowledge of skills needed

concerning ways in which they can prepare their children from home to school to reinforce school efforts on behalf of their children (Gorton, 1968). This lack of confidence is sometimes so pronounced that some parents sincerely believe they should limit instruction at home so as not to interfere with the school (Strom, 1974). In a series of longitudinal studies related to early readers, for example, parents of non-early readers interviewed felt that it was the job of trained persons to teach reading and that parental help might confuse the child (Durkin, 1966).

Parents did not necessarily arrive at this conclusion on their own, however. It would seem that they have been led to believe for years that they lack the ability to help children. In the United States, for example, the national early childhood projects such as Headstart, established on the premise that children needed to be rescued from family influence (Strom, 1974) portrayed this attitude none too subtly. Gordon added that educators often feel that the disadvantaged parent is incapable of working with her own child in ways that will enhance the child's development (1968). The common practice of reading in Newfoundland in the late sixties and the seventies, that of refusing children the privilege of taking readers home, could also have been construed by some parents to mean that the school considered them incapable of helping their children with reading.

Current Attitudes of Parents and Educators
Toward Parent Participation

Parental Desire to Help Children in Reading
Unchanged Despite Limited Participation

Limited participation of parents in their childrens' education, then, may not be synonymous with parent apathy. In fact, parent enquiries during parent-teacher interviews and parent response to questionnaires and surveys indicate that they have continued to be concerned about their childrens' achievement in school and about what they can do about it. Results of a New Zealand study, for example, showed that approximately 98% of 814 parents surveyed are interested and felt they could help their children with reading (Nicholson, 1980). Similarly, on the basis of interviews with parents of children with reading problems, Pikulski reported that almost all parents have tried to help their children overcome their problem (1974). Granowsky and others found that 90% of parents of 70,000 elementary school children in Dallas, Texas, felt that the education of their children should not be the sole responsibility of the school (1979). Finally, when parents of children in fifteen elementary schools in Montgomery County, Maryland, were asked what kind of Title-I compensatory program they would be interested in attending the greatest response was to learn what things they could do to help their children with reading skills (Breiling, 1976).

Parental desire to help their children to perform better in school, then, has not changed much over the years. In writing about New York City's Program for Developing the Role of Parents in Reading Progress, Lloyd began with "The year may be 1965, or '75, or '85, but the question will always be the same when a parent meets his child's teacher -- 'How can I help my child in reading?'" (1965). The situation with respect to how educators feel about parent participation, however, apparently has changed.

Attitude of Educators Now Apparently Supportive

Educators have now become more cognizant of parental influence in helping to educate their own children. Dr. John W. Gardner, President of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, suggested in 1966 that the appropriate response to parents who were not about to accept the older prevailing "hands off" policy and to leave the education of their children to the professionals, was to enlist these same parents as allies and instruct them to proceed intelligently, instead of fighting them off (Rizer, 1966). Likewise Strom (1974) reports that since 1971 federal compensatory programs in the United States shifted from Headstart to Homestart -- from trying to overcome parents' influence to actually enlisting their support. Reports from across the United States show that more and more schools see the parents in a less threatening role. An older attitude of "we don't want parents poking about in school business" is being replaced

with "we need your help" (Granowsky and others, 1979). Finally, in 1976 Artley recommended that parents be made full fledged partners in the educational process through information on the reading program and suggestions of supplemental home activities (Breiling, 1976). This recommendation followed the overwhelming response from 100 education majors to the question if anyone or anything beside teachers contributed to their interest and ability in reading. The response was: parents and family. Breiling reports also that similar recommendations were made by George Gallup (1975) and by Dorothy Rich (1973).

Indeed, parent involvement has approached a level of importance to be considered mandatory in some cases. In the province of Saskatchewan, for example, the Education Act, 1978, states that the principal "shall establish mutually acceptable and beneficial channels for communication between the school and parents of the pupils" (Sackney, 1981, p. 5).

Arguments Supporting Parent Involvement in Children's Reading

Importance of Parental Influence in Preparing Children for Reading and in Early Reading

Other arguments advanced to support the contention that parents should be involved in the education of their children, especially reading, have also concentrated on the importance of the family. Smith postulates that the group in which the individual is socialized, that is, the family,

influences his motivation to achieve in school (1968). She concluded that the values and attitudes of the parents provide the pattern by which the child's values are shaped, and that the father who reads books frequently for enjoyment is setting an example for the child that will determine the child's values and attitudes. By contrast, she felt that the child whose home is devoid of books, magazines and newspapers will not see these as important in his daily living and therefore will not value them. Also, Klein (1978) in discussing the effect of the availability of reading material in the home on developing a child's interest in books and reading, cited a study by Sheldon and Carrillo (1952) that investigated the relation of parents, the home environment, and certain developmental characteristics to children's reading ability. According to her one significant finding was the relationship between availability of books in the home and reading achievement. It was determined that as the number of books in the home increased, the percent of good readers increased. Similarly, Brett (1964) and again Crocker (1967), both studying the leisure reading of students and the effects of reading material in the home, agreed that the reading habits developed by children were unquestionably a direct result of the example set by parents.

The importance of parents in children's early reading received further verification by Durkins (1966) and by Kasdon (1968). In a series of longitudinal studies relating to

early readers, Durkins found that factors which relate to early reading success included a realization by parents that they can and should give pre-school help to their children. By way of contrast, parents of non-early readers interviewed felt that it was the job of trained persons to teach reading. Similarly, Kasdon, in a study investigating whether giftedness could be identified early in the life of a child, found that approximately half of the fifty superior readers among college freshmen reported that they were able to read before entering first grade, and that two-thirds of these cited parental influence in learning to read. She concluded that "educators should give greater recognition to the importance of the family in children's early reading development".

The first few years within this social group, that is, the family, provide valuable opportunities for the parents to capitalize upon peak growth periods. If one endorses Ward's (1970) view that reading is a culmination of a variety of experiences over the first seven or more years of a child's life, then that child will be presented to the reading teacher with a prereading base of certain skills, concepts, feelings, and knowledge gained from the experiences of his environment. She concludes

The role of "parenting" is so vital to the arranging of such accumulations that the role of being "the first teacher of reading" is unmistakable (p. 756).

The importance of such an accumulation of experiences lies in the child's ability to comprehend what he reads.

Comprehension in reading has been defined as "building a bridge between the known and the unknown" (Swaby, 1981). This may mean that one comprehends by relating the incoming information to what one already knows, and that the more information one has to relate this new information to, the better is the chance of understanding it. Obviously, for example, the parent who provides his child with all kinds of information about the animals found in the zoo will have prepared his child to understand reading about zoos.

Moreover, the parent is in a better position than the teacher to help the child with reading comprehension, once he is conscious of how comprehension may be facilitated by the child's experiential background. Parents have, for example, almost total information about their children, while the teacher has almost a total lack of information. When the child becomes engaged in the reading act for either the teacher or the parent, it is the teacher who is more likely unaware of what experiences the child has to relate to the reading. This knowledge of children would seem to be crucial in helping the child to learn to read (Hoskisson, 1974).

Because of this parental influence in preparing children for reading does not mean that the task is completed when children begin school, as it is sometimes thought. Actually, the period following the initiation into reading is crucial and a decrease in interest and concern can be disastrous if the child had been receiving help prior to this

point. That is, once a child starts to read, several factors may be operating which sometimes lead to a lessening of parental help. Except for the teacher, the family has been shown to be the only continuing influence of learning. Parents need to be aware of this in order to prevent problems from occurring. Hubbard and Salt (1975) did an intensive study of the way of life and attitudes to education of thirty-three families in a northern industrial community in the United States. Although they found that the informal and often unconscious preparation of the child at the pre-school age was surprisingly good and had taken place in a setting of deep emotional support, it was noted that after the child's entry into school factors of discontinuity and frustration tended to creep in. They found in particular that the initiation of the child into reading at school appeared to be accompanied by a significant fall in emotional support at home. They concluded that because children whose acute early reading difficulties might well have been derived from the problem of discontinuity in the matter of emotional support for pre-reading and early reading activity the classroom teacher could not take the place of the family participants in this complex involvement. The problem, they add, was not one of substituting for the family's emotional support in the matter of pre-reading, but of positively encouraging this support in the widest possible range of families and ensuring that it be maintained to the optimum point beyond the pre-reading stage (1975).

The need for continuation of parental support has also been confirmed by Bronfenbrenner, while evaluating compensatory programs in the United States in the 1960's. He found that involving parents as well as their children in enrichment activities, including language abilities, resulted in cognitive gains which were still evident in the children three or four years after termination of the programs. However, when parental involvement was not an important program component children did not maintain the cognitive gains (Anselmo, 1978).

Parent Participation in Reading and the Role of Educators

The relationship between parent potential and actual parent effectiveness in helping children read appears to be less than positive. The reality of the situation, ironically, is that too infrequently do children's reading profit as a result of their parents' vital position as leaders in the family unit. Parents frequently try to help at home but often they do not know what they can do to help (Duncan and Vonbehren, 1974; Pikulski, 1974; and Klein, 1978). These parents need assistance in helping children with reading, simply because their attempts to help unilaterally may be doing more harm than good. This may be especially true if the parents' methods are different from those of the teachers.

Importance of Harmony Between Home and School Procedures

In a study designed to investigate what procedures parents follow at home, Nicholson (1980) found that parents who listen to children read at home differ considerably in the kinds of help they give when the child comes to a word which he/she cannot recognize. Approximately 50 percent ask their children to "sound out" words as the first step, about 30 percent encourage their children to search for clues in the text, and some just tell their children the word. He points out that while all these strategies can be useful, their effectiveness may depend on the extent to which they reinforce the help that is given at school. He suggests that if parents are made aware of the main approach used by the teacher in the classroom, then they could follow similar strategies at home. Similarly Dave (1963), in talking about the influence of motivational factors on educational attainment, hypothesizes that if the pressures applied by the home upon the child are congruent with those exerted by the school, then reinforcement occurs between the two.

Effects of Disharmony Between Home and School Procedures

The results of parental help, exemplified when there is a lack of congruence between the home and the school, or when the parent proceeds without the teacher's support, may be similar to those found by Pikulski (1974), who interviewed parents of over two hundred children evaluated at his Reading Study Center at the University of Delaware. He found that

almost all parents of these children have tried to help their children to overcome their reading problem but that the most frequent result is severe frustration for both the child and the parent. Less than one percent reported that their attempts to remediate the child's problems were non-stressful. Pikulski's experience suggests, according to him, that parents who want to help their children with reading frequently can do so by taking a course of action which avoids stressful relationships between the parent and the child.

Support of Educators Necessary to Facilitate
Parent Effectiveness in Helping Children Read

However, it has been pointed out in previous contexts that parents lack this knowledge, generally. Since parents are genuinely interested in helping their children learn to read they need guidance in this endeavor, simply for the reasons proposed above, to help to make sure that what they do at home will be more effective in supporting the work of the teacher and in avoiding stressful relationships between the parent and the child. Since educators also feel that the parents can contribute significantly to children's reading performance, and since they possess the knowledge that parents need in order for the parent to contribute effectively, the logical extension implies that educators assume the responsibility for showing parents how to help successfully.

Having introduced the assumption that teachers, it would seem, must take the initiative in encouraging and

guiding parents to become effective partners in teaching children to read, this reporter will survey the literature in relationship to parent involvement in children's reading, in the context of guidance from educators, in an attempt to make available to teachers the pertinent research findings. Simply providing teachers with this information is considered an essential first step in facilitating this process.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Emphasis on Fostering Parental
Participation in Reading

That parents may be effective in facilitating the development of children's reading skills has long been recognized. Until the late 1960's, however, parents were presumed to be influential only at home, the decision to become involved in children's reading being entirely up to them. Parents and schools had been operating independently of each other, though by the 1960's they were beginning to progress to the point of cooperation. These instances were rare, however, since it had long been a common practice for educators to warn parents "not to meddle in the mysteries of the teaching-learning process" (Regal and Rizer, 1966, p. 1).

Despite these rumblings the need for, and the benefits of, parent participation in reading had been espoused by some educators and there had been continuing efforts to influence parents to become active, prior to the period under review. Unfortunately, these efforts relied heavily on published material in predominately professional magazines, and erroneously presumed parental access to them. Although more effective means of involving parents in helping children read have been used in the seventies and in this decade, reliance on former methods already noted continues to be preferred by some.

Various Kinds of Materials Designed
to Influence Parents

The various kinds of publications that sought to inform parents with respect to their role in children's reading will be examined here. The first of these, books specifically related to parental involvement in reading, enjoyed considerable marketing success during the period. In 1955, Flesch (1955) published Why Johnny Can't Read, almost half of which was devoted to phonics exercises that parents could use at home. Flesch urged parents to become involved in the teaching of reading at home to counteract the work of the schools, who, according to him, were using the "whole-word" approach to teaching reading. With the help of the media Flesch's book became so well known that it became the "surprising topic of social conversation" (Hendryson, 1971, p. 45).

More recently books of a similar nature, phonics-oriented, generally criticizing the approaches to the teaching of reading used in schools, include Home Guide to Early Reading (Gould, 1976), and Teach Your Child to Read in Sixty Days (Ledson, 1975), a Canadian program which received a somewhat adverse reception here in Newfoundland. Perhaps because they were controversial these books received media support.

Parent participation in reading was encouraged, without the aid of the press, however, through books of a less controversial nature. Several complete home reading

programs have been offered to parents to be used on and with pre-school children. Among these are Allens' (1964) Read Along With Me, Ledoux's (1967) Play 'N Talk Reading, Doman's (1964) How To Teach Your Baby To Read, and Braun and Menzies' (1981) First Steps To Reading, a book of language activities for pre-readers. For parents of children who have already started to read, Donaldson's (1957) Helping Your Child To Read Better is a good comprehensive guide, with its two major themes being 1) ways that parents might cooperate with teachers and 2) activities that will stimulate more and better reading at home. Another, more recent, interesting game-oriented program for parents to use with beginning readers was developed by DeFranco and Pickarts (1972). Parents, Help Your Child To Read has been published in America, Canada, Australia and England. Finally, in response to questions that parents ask about reading, Larrick (1974) has developed a handbook that was reviewed by representatives of eighteen national organizations and has gone through four editions since 1956. According to Larrick the continuing concern about children's reading and the plea for guidance in developing children's love of reading has led to the publication of successive editions.

Numerous articles in various professional journals have addressed the question of parents and reading. The International Reading Association (IRA) has provided a forum through which the relationship between parents and reading

has been discussed on numerous occasions, both in its official journals and in special publications. Four entire issues of the Reading Teacher, (April, 1954; October, 1956; May, 1965; and May, 1970) have been devoted to this topic.

In 1968 parent participation in reading received further encouragement from this organization when it jointly sponsored a conference on "Parents and Reading" with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, and subsequently published the papers presented at the conference in a volume with the same title, edited by Smith (1971).

Other material addressed to parents abounds in books, chapters in books, and pamphlets which give practical suggestions to parents concerning their children's reading. (For example, see in the list of references the NEA "A Briefing for Parents"; The Scott, Foresman publication titled "When Parents Ask About Reading"; Eric Johnson's (1959) humorous guide for parents, "How to Live Through Junior High School"; George Spache's (1965) "Parents and the Reading Program"; and Chapter 18 in Tinker and McCullough (1962)). Finally, the International Reading Association has been continuously publishing monographs and micro-monographs such as "What Books and Records Should I Get for My Preschooler?" (Rogers, 1972), "What is Reading Readiness?" (Rogers, 1971), "How Can I Help My Child Get Ready to Read?" (Rogers, 1972), "How Can I Encourage My Primary-Grade Child to Read" (Ransbury, 1972), "Thirty-One Ways to Help Your Children

Become Better Readers" (Ernst, 1979) and "How Can I Help My Child Build Positive Attitudes Toward Reading?" (Glazer, 1980).

Potential Disadvantages of Such Material

Despite the amount of attention paid to helping parents to recognize and to exercise their role in children's reading there are several disadvantages associated with relying on the foregoing kinds of materials that may limit 1) the amount of desired parent participation; 2) the effectiveness of this participation; and 3) the measurement of its effectiveness in terms of changing parental attitudes, or in terms of improving children's reading achievement.

The first of these disadvantages relates to the difficulty of access to these materials by parents. For example, much writing is published in professional journals and magazines and books that are available usually only from university libraries. Since it is well known that even teachers come in contact infrequently with professional journals and books devoted specifically to the teaching of reading, parents are much less likely to interact with these materials.

Second, these materials may limit parent participation, especially those published in magazines commonly read by the general public, because they may cause confusion among parents. This confusion sometimes arises from the fact that much material intended for parents with respect to reading has

been written by persons without classroom experiences in teaching children to read. According to Artley (1965), for example, a check of the Readers Guide to Periodical Literature covering the period from 1961 to 1963 indicated that of forty-six authors of articles appearing in magazines read by the general public, such as the "Saturday Evening Post", "Parents Magazine", and "Better Homes and Gardens", only one could be called a reading specialist. In most cases the articles were prepared by staff or free-lance writers who had little pertinent background (Artley, 1965).

The confusion experienced by parents after reading such material is illustrated by a case in point. Hendryson (1971) relates how, being young and somewhat uninformed in how children learn to read, she eagerly followed Childcraft Encyclopedia's instructions to the effect that a parent must never teach a child to read a single word; the parent's function being to provide readiness experiences. However, after telling her son words at his request, she often felt guilty for days, not sure whether he had learned the "right" way to identify the word. The fact that her son could identify words on signboards puzzled her terribly because according to the theory she had read he was not supposed to be able to do so (Hendryson, 1971).

In addition to the possible limiting effects of such obviously erroneous advice on parental participation in helping children read, the effectiveness of this participation may have been further decreased by confusion arising from

another source. Some writings publicize a narrow approach or methodology which the author alleges to be the sole panacea for poor reading. For example, Flesch (1955), Ledson (1975) and Gould (1976) all propagated variations of the phonetic (or "phonics") approach to the teaching of reading. Flesch, in particular, blamed all of America's reading failures on the "whole word" approach; his phonetic exercises, accordingly, would remedy this situation. Similarly, Ledson (1976), advocating the use of phonics as the superior method of teaching reading, claimed that "Despite its ruinous effects on national reading standards, the whole-word method continues to be used in four out of five schools" (p. 61). He argues that the total devastating effect of the whole-word approach is not even fully known because many parents pitch in to make it work by teaching phonics at home. This superficial interpretation of reading belies an ignorance of significant improvements respecting recent knowledge of the reading process and is not worthy of being recognized as a position from which one would give advice to others. For parents who were interested enough to want to help their children with reading, and who probably assumed they knew enough about reading and about how it was being taught in schools, Ledson's criticisms of school reading methods certainly could not have been comforting.

To illustrate how the confusion regarding reading methods might limit the effect of parent participation, consider the situation in which the parent, in following the

procedures suggested by authors such as those mentioned above, may have encountered opposition from the child who was being taught by methods other than phonics in school. It is a recognized fact that children often regard the teacher's word as "law". Consequently, in a home teaching-learning situation in which the parent persists in helping by using reading methods contrary to those used by the teacher, strained parent-child relationships may be the result. If, for example, the child failed to "sound out" a word at the request of the parent because this approach was not being emphasized at school, both parties might eventually experience frustration and stress, decreasing the effectiveness of the parent's efforts. Although parents may be encouraged to become involved in helping children read as a result of some of the advice available in the materials under consideration, unilateral intervention strategies at home may be more effective when they coincide and reinforce the help that is given at school -- a practice obviously frowned upon by authors such as Ledson.

Finally, in discussing the kinds of writing already referred to, the amount of involvement generated, as well as its positive or negative effects on parents, may be practically impossible to assess. Those materials were addressed to the general public, with no assurance that they would be read by parents or their ideas and suggestions used. The only provision for feedback to the author involved the knowledge of how widespread its publication was or, in the case of

books, how many copies sold. In terms of evaluating their effectiveness on parent participation in reading this information is limited indeed.

Focus of this Review

Programs and Projects Designed Specifically to Involve Parents in Reading

This review will focus on programs and projects initiated by schools, school systems, universities and other educational institutions specifically to involve parents as partners in reading, by providing the necessary guidance to help ensure that both parents and teachers work together in a co-ordinated effort in helping to increase children's reading achievement. Unlike previously reviewed materials, encouraging the support of parents in reading, the programs, projects or studies reviewed in this survey were accompanied by attempts to evaluate their effect, both on children's reading and on parents' attitude toward participating itself.

Activity in this Area Up to the Middle 1960's

Although programs of this kind were few until the late 1960's their tremendous potential had not gone unrecognized. Such activities in the area of home-school cooperation were regarded as more desirable projects than rigorous experiments. In a review of seven research studies on the role of parents in promoting reading achievement by Russell and Fea (1963). Those studies under review at that time were concerned with 1) relating early reading progress

to home conditions (Almy, 1949); 2) collecting parents opinions about reading programs (Presnall, 1956); 3) analysing the questions parents ask (Artley, 1956; and McConnell, 1957); and 4) showing the relationship between parents' and children's choices in juvenile literature (Jefferson, 1958; and Rudman, 1956). While lamenting the fact that much of the writing on the place of parents in childrens' reading development is hortatory and inspirational rather than grounded in research, they did suggest that "an evaluation of methods of communication and of ways schools can assist parents may be more effective in demonstration-action situations than in more carefully controlled experiments" (p. 918). Similarly, the only other review uncovered, undertaken by Della-Piana, Stahmen and Allens (1968), five years later, likewise identified numerous parent education programs, but only six focussed on helping parents to improve reading achievement at home.

Events Influencing an Increase in Such Activity

Although the period up to and including the decade of the sixties is associated with a dearth of "demonstration-action" situations in home and school cooperation, focussing specifically on reading improvement, this decade is at least noteworthy for the beginning of a chain of events that significantly influenced the increase in these demonstration-action situations. Sweeping changes in the funding of education in the United States, although for the improvement

of education generally, and for disadvantaged children specifically, ultimately led to a greater recognition of parents' potential in helping to improve children's reading and eventually resulted in an increase in the kinds of programs under review in this study.

More specifically, a commitment to the thesis that the learning difficulty of the disadvantaged in the United States resulted from poor preparation and poor motivation for learning at home (Goldberg, 1968) resulted in massive federal funding for what has been termed "compensatory education". Programs such as Headstart and Follow-Through, and (after the 1965 Elementary and Secondary Education Act) Title I programs, were initiated with the premise that provisions for parents as major influences in the learning of their children be included (Gordon, 1968).

Although these compensatory programs were generally massive, and are excluded from this review for that reason, the success of the parent involvement component of these programs in the area of language development (Anselmo, 1978) and sometimes specifically in the area of reading improvement, tended to solidify the concept of parents as partners and to increase the formulation of parent participation programs devoted entirely to helping children read.

Some of these successful parent involvement programs devoted entirely to reading gained favorable recognition through subsequent publication in special volumes and in various professional journals related to reading. The theme

of the Reading Teacher (February, 1966), for example, was "Operation Headstart" with each contributor having positive comments on parent involvement in describing the results of their programs. Also, Passow (1968) editor of Developing Programs for the Educationally Disadvantaged, commenting on the success of Smiths' contribution "School and Home-Focus on Achievement", suggested the techniques used were applicable not only to disadvantaged children but that "we can well afford to develop from these experimental findings innovations valuable for all children" (p. 88). The International Reading Association's jointly sponsored conference on Parents and Reading (1971) with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, referred to earlier, included the results of a successful experiment to determine how effectively parents can prepare their preschool children for reading (Brzeinski and Driscoll, 1964). The Reading Teacher (May, 1970), with "Parent-Teacher Communication" as its theme, included a description and results of a parent involvement program entitled "How to Help Your Child With Reading in the Home" (Harrington, 1969). In this issue also, Ward reported on two examples of Follow Through parent involvement programs, the Florida Parent Education Approach, developed under the sponsorship of Dr. Ira Gordon at the University of Florida at Gainesville, and the Parent Implementation Approach. Both programs specifically were centred around the role of parents as the first and continuous teachers of their children.

Consequently, with this increasing recognition of the role of the parents, the 1970's opened with many Title I programs being devoted entirely to piloting ways in which parents could be involved as teaching partners in the reading process (Criscuolo, 1970; Fager and Williams, 1973). Eventually this phenomenon became recognized to the extent that Title I programs for the years 1974-76 were designed specifically to involve the parent in the reading process both in the home and at school (Greenfield, 1977). Greenfield, for example, stated that the need for parent involvement in her program was determined by the reports of Title I programs from the United States Office of Education (1977).

Additionally, efforts to involve parents as teachers in the reading process were stimulated when the United States Federal government allocated \$80 million toward the then Commissioner of Education, James E. Allen's "Right to Read" campaign for the 1970's. Teachers and professional personnel involved with reading were advocating that part of this money be set aside for personnel and programs to reach the city parents, many of whom were so busy trying to provide a living for their families that they had little time to provide a home atmosphere conducive to developing reading skills and good attitudes toward reading (Criscuolo, 1970).

Bolstered by these developments the prominence of parent involvement in reading increased in the 1970's to the extent that experimental programs were initiated by various educational personnel, including university professors,

teachers and school district personnel. These programs demonstrated that much can be accomplished, often with very meager resources. It was established that reliance on federal funding or other sources of financial aid was not a prerequisite for success in soliciting parental support in helping children read.

Intent of this Study

It is the purpose of this study first to survey the activity in the area of parent participation in reading since 1960, which marked the beginning of this phenomenon, and to make available to parents and teachers a summary of each project pertinent to the topic, emphasizing, where possible, the following;

1. the purpose of the program,
2. the program's features and procedures,
3. the nature and extent of parent involvement,
4. how parents were encouraged to participate,
5. the effect of parental involvement in reading on children's reading achievement,
6. parental response to their own participation in children's reading, and
7. teacher response to parental involvement in children's reading.

A second purpose of this study will be to identify program features and aspects of parent involvement that appear to be most effective. Finally, to facilitate parental involvement

in this province, this reporter will attempt to review the Newfoundland educational scene with respect to identifying indigenous factors that may facilitate initiatives in the area under study.

CHAPTER III

STUDY SUMMARIES

Introduction to the SummariesFocus of the Review

This survey will focus on studies and projects that, primarily from the research point of view, have supplied specific data about the influence on children's reading, when their parents have become involved. Technological and socio-economic changes in today's society, impacting on the school and the home environment, has necessitated limiting the period under review to the last two decades. This restriction has been considered in order to prevent generalizing or making conclusions on the basis of unreliable data.

Increase of Activity Involving Parents in Reading

The conclusion of previous reviewers, Russell and Fea (1963) and Della-Piana, Stahmen and Allen (1968), that much of the writing on the role of the parent in promoting reading achievement is hortatory and inspirational rather than grounded in research are still valid. For example, a more recent attempt at bringing together the writing in this particular area of study, although annotated bibliography as opposed to a formal review, included only ten (out of thirty-six articles) that report on programs developed and implemented to involve parents in reading. Of these ten,

only five can be classified as statistical experiments. Reiterating the assertion in Chapter I, that activity in this area continues to increase, the present survey uncovered forty studies whose programs serve as models for involving parents in their children's reading achievement. This chapter contains this reporter's summary of each study.

Selection of Studies Criteria

Since this study emphasizes effective utilization of research findings, in that school systems may incorporate what has been learned, and since it is rationalized that large, complex, expensive and comprehensive projects on a scale comparable to the various compensatory programs in the United States (where the accessibility of funding was a motivating factor in initiating such undertaking) may be a major factor in discouraging effective incorporation of what has been learned, projects were selected whose program implementation required minimal expense and use of existing facilities. Some funded programs were included, however, because they either conformed to the selection criteria or included specific program components or features that can be effectively implemented on a much smaller scale. All projects selected involved the development and implementation of a specific parent involvement program in reading.

Of the forty studies selected, this reporter observed, as did Della-Piana, Stahmen and Allen (1968), weaknesses in design characteristics, the most serious being the omission

of controlling for variables, and of built-in evaluation of treatment effects. Those programs suffering from design weaknesses are nevertheless very promising, and have been included, again, for the reason expounded by Russell and Fea (1963) in the previous chapter, that an evaluation of methods of communication and of ways schools can assist parents may be more effective in demonstration-action situations than in more carefully controlled experiments. That is not to say that carefully designed and controlled experiments are not valuable. Certainly, they are the backbone of our knowledge in the field of reading and will continue to be so. In support of the former, however, Cleland (1980) feels that more informal investigation may also lead us to valuable insights and testable hypotheses.

Classification of Program Models

These forty program models of parent involvement in reading may be classified as experimental or descriptive research, depending on whether the findings are described statistically or subjectively. Twenty-nine of the program models may be considered as conforming to the criteria for statistical research while the remaining eleven may be classified as descriptive research. Their summaries will be presented in two separate sections: the first section containing the summaries considered statistical; the second section containing the subjective summaries.

Organization for Presentation of the Program Models

Certain elements common to the design characteristics of the program models help to facilitate their organization for presentation into three broad categories (See Table 3):

1) those in which the program model featured involving the parents in a psychological training program emphasizing contingency management techniques characteristic of group guidance and referred to by that title; 2) those in which the program model featured involving the parents in meetings designed to teach them information about reading, ideas and/or materials they could use at home, and how to provide a supportive home environment, entitled Information About Reading; and 3) those in which the program model featured training or preparing parents to use specifically prepared program materials or a curriculum designed to be used at home or at school, entitled, Parents Teach Own Children.

Limitations of Program Model Summaries

These program model summaries represent this reporter's efforts to encapsulate the authors' descriptions of the studies while at the same time providing the reader with the details necessary to describe the ideas and procedures followed, and their results. This was not always possible, however, since several authors failed to list in systematic fashion essential information pertinent to the design characteristics or evaluation. Among the missing information are such things as 1) the duration of the program,

2) the age level of the children involved, 3) the number of children and parents involved, 4) the effect of the study on children's reading attitudes, interests, and habits, and 5) parent and teacher attitudes toward parent participation in general, and toward children and their reading in particular.

Experimental Summaries

Program Models Categorized as Group Guidance

Relationship Between Change in Attitudes of Disadvantaged Pupils Toward Reading and the Involvement of Their Parents in a Reading Program.

Jimmie Merle Craig
United States International University, 1968.

1. Purpose of the Study

To measure attitude changes toward reading that occurred in a group of culturally disadvantaged junior high school pupils in relationship to their parents' participation in reading improvement classes and a series of counselling conferences; and to examine the relationship between changes in student attitudes toward reading and changes in reading achievement growth rate.

2. Description of the Sample

Experimental and control groups were formed from one hundred and eighty-four seventh, eighth, and ninth grade pupils in the San Diego Unified School District, who were one or more years retarded in reading achievement as measured by a standardized reading test. All subjects resided in a disadvantaged area and were predominantly members of minority racial and ethnic groups.

3. Parent Participation in the Program

Parents of one of the experimental groups were involved in reading improvement classes, while the parents of the other experimental group were involved in counseling conferences.

4. Effect of the Parent Participation Program on the Reading Achievement of their Children

Statistical analysis of data collected through the use of tests measuring reading achievement and attitude toward reading revealed that the hypotheses advanced in the study were not supported. However, the group of students whose parents were involved in counseling conferences tended to show more positive change in attitude than the group whose parents attended a reading improvement class. Also, the pupils who showed positive change in attitude toward reading showed positive growth in reading achievement. Paradoxically, a slight negative change was noted in attitude toward reading during the operation of the experimental program. Likewise, the group of students whose parents were not involved in the reading program showed a statistically significant greater positive change in attitude toward reading achievement, skills, and habits than the group of students whose parents were involved. For pupils who showed no change or a negative change in attitude toward reading, there was no growth in reading achievement.

The Influence of Parental Attitudes and Child-Parent Interaction Upon Remedial Reading Progress.

Gabrial Della-Piana, Robert T. Stahman, and John E. Allen
University of Utah Project, 1966

Supported by the Cooperative Research Program of the Office of Education, U.S.A., Department of Health, Education and Welfare.

1. Purpose of the Study

To show the effect of a parent training program on silent and oral reading and to correlate mothers' attitudes with silent and oral reading. More specifically, the investigators tested the hypotheses that 1) third to sixth grade children enrolled in remedial reading classes while their mothers participated in a parent-training program would make significantly greater gains in reading proficiency than would a randomly selected control group of children of the same ability and achievement from the same classes, but whose mothers were not enrolled in a parent-training program, and 2) that parent attitudes would be significantly correlated with reading gains of their respective children.

2. How Parents were Encouraged to Participate

In late spring of 1965 "Invitational Letters to Parents" were sent to the parents of all children of two elementary schools who were identified as being one or more years below grade level. Approximately fifty percent of the parents responded, which amounted to a sample of forty-five children.

3. Description of the Sample

Twenty students were selected to enroll in a remedial class at each school. The students were then randomly assigned to experimental and control groups, which by the end of the experiment were reduced to thirteen experimental and sixteen control.

4. How Parents Participated or a Description of the Training Program

The parent training program consisted of fourteen formal sessions and two individual sessions with each parent, extending from September 15 to December 15, 1965. There were some individual appointments in addition to these, in parents' homes or at the university to discuss progress and problems in applying contingency management techniques to their children. In broad outline form, the parent training program involved the following: -

- 1) Teach parents a language for talking about the nature and effects of punishment and five alternatives to punishment.
- 2) The parent observes a child's questionable behavior, gets a base rate for the behavior and describes in detail what happened and the circumstances or stimulus conditions under which the behavior occurred.
- 3) The parent learns to identify what is reinforcing for his child.
- 4) The parent identifies the behavior to be changed including those deriving from step "2" above plus those deriving from an analysis of the child's reading ability reported to parents, and
- 5) The parent tries punishment and/or any of the five alternatives to punishment that seem appropriate.

5. The Effect of the Training Program on Children's Reading Ability

Analysis of the data to determine the percent of variance on the respective reading achievement measures accounted for by experimental treatments indicated that

1) both oral reading accuracy and comprehension measures reflected significant treatment differences favoring the experimental group, and a substantial amount of variance was accounted for by the treatment, and

2) silent reading measures reflected only one significant treatment difference and that favoring the control group.

6. The Effect of the Study on Parents' Attitude and Their Correlation with Reading Gains

The authors report that of the three PARI Factors used, Factors I, II, and III, only Factor III (approval of positive attitudes toward child reading) was significantly correlated with silent reading comprehension and oral reading rate.

7. Conclusions

The authors report that they found the experimental treatment (parent-training) to have an impressive effect on oral reading gains.

Parent Education Experimental Program

J.M. Regal, Research Director,
Oakland Interagency Project

Dorothy Rizer, Assistant Professor
College of Education
University of British Columbia

1. Purpose of the Study

Recognizing the significance of the family unit as potentially the most effective treatment resource for children with educational problems, the authors designed the Parent Education Experimental Program (PEEP) to explore that available resource. Specifically the program sought to modify children's attitudes and subsequently their reading behavior by working solely with their parents in a Vancouver School District.

2. Description of the Subjects, the Research Procedure, and How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

The technique employed to attract parents in order to select an experimental group of children to meet the criteria of the study was the use of the mass media of communication -- newspapers, radio and television. Shortly following the news articles, enough applications were obtained from parents from which to select an experimental group who met the criteria of the study. Children had to be low academic achievers with an I.Q. of 80 or above. Fifty-four families registered for the program. The children in the matched group were selected by school principals with the following criteria as a guide: the Experimental and Matched child were to be

students in the same classroom, of the same sex, and similar in age, I.Q., and previous school performance.

3. Description of the Program and the Extent of Parent Participation

The program extended over seventeen weeks and centered on an action-research methodology for developing techniques to instruct parents in the remedial skills necessary for them to help their children achieve more academically.

Parent participation took two forms; group meetings, and individual one-hour interviews with a counsellor once every other week. The group meetings concentrated on discussions of principles and techniques of the teaching-learning process. The intent of the instructors at these meetings was to teach parents how to help their children in study skills and to suggest means for providing encouragement and support. The purpose of the individual sessions was to help the mother apply the general information covered at the group meetings to her family.

4. Effect of the Program on Children's Reading Achievement

In evaluating the success of the program the authors set a minimum gain of .8 of an academic year to benefit from the program, twice that which would have been achieved over seventeen weeks, regardless of whether these children were subject to a special program. An examination of the data collected through pre- and post-testing revealed that 73 percent of the children met the criterion

of success -- twice the normal gain or better. The authors report also that the gain of the experimental group was significantly more than the gain of the matched group.* They were gratified that parental involvement was reflected in the children so extensively and rapidly.

5. Conclusion

Using an approach which has been referred to as "group guidance" Regal and Rizer were able, apparently, to move parents to accept the principle that they have the primary educational responsibility for their children. Mothers also enjoyed individual conferences the better to help them "incorporate ... remedial (reading) techniques into their family routine and to provide support and encouragement on an as-needed basis" (Robinson and Pettie, 1966). These authors, in commenting on Regal and Rizer's study emphasized the fact that again, significant improvement in reading skills was forthcoming.

Group Guidance With Mothers of Retarded Readers

Janice MacDonald Studholme
Assistant Professor of Reading and Education
Unpublished Doctoral Study
Hofstra College Reading Center
Hempstead, New York

1. Purpose of the Study

To explore 1) some of the attitudes held by mothers of retarded readers, 2) whether attendance in group guidance would result in changes of these attitudes, and 3) if there were changes, would a student's reading progress change in relationship to changes in his mother's attitudes and behavior.

2. Description of the Sample, the Program, and How Parents Participated

Six mothers volunteered to attend six weekly group discussions, usually lasting about two hours, held over a three-month period, while their sons were attending reading classes. The mothers were encouraged to speak freely, and no limits were set on the choice of discussion topics. Each mother made a final written evaluation of the group sessions.

Their sons were between the ages of twelve and seventeen, all of average intelligence, and all from two to five years below grade level in reading. Mothers reported that the boys had experienced difficulty with reading from the primary grades and each boy had had at least one year of competent remedial reading work prior to the study, the results of which were largely negative.

The boys attended reading lessons for two hours a week at the reading center.

3. Sources of Data Collection

Information on mothers' attitudes was collected using The Parental Attitude Research Instrument (PARI) and typescripts of the recorded group discussion periods, plus a final written evaluation of the group sessions completed by each mother.

Information about the boys' reading achievement was gained through the use of standardized and informal reading tests, administered at the beginning and at the end of the study. Information on the boys' attitudes was collected through the use of a recorded PARI. An individual recorded interview was held with each student in an attempt to ascertain whether the boy had perceived any changes in his mother's attitude and behavior towards him and his reading difficulties during the time she had been attending the group meetings.

Each reading teacher rated each student on an attitude scale at the beginning and at the end of the study period, and weekly observation sheets were kept by each teacher on each student.

A content analysis was made of the protocols of the mother's group sessions. Certain of the initial attitudes of the mothers were selected and presented under five main categories: 1) attitudes toward their own reading, 2) attitudes toward their sons' reading problems,

- 3) attitudes toward their sons, 4) attitudes toward the school, and 5) attitudes toward themselves as individuals.
4. Effect of the Program on the Boys' Attitudes and Reading Achievement

The teachers reported that the attitudes of four of the boys toward their reading lessons had greatly improved during the period of time which coincided with the mothers' attendance at the group meetings. There was, however, a marked regression to old attitudes of the boys a short time after the termination of the group meetings for the mother.

The boys whose attitudes toward their reading lessons were reported markedly improved by their reading teachers made the most gains in reading achievement according to the results on the reading tests. Their gains ranged from eight months to almost two years over a three-month period.

5. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitudes

Previously, the mothers' expressed attitudes toward themselves and toward their sons and their sons' reading problems in all cases were largely negative. Changes were reported by each of the mothers in some of her initial attitudes, such as understanding of the boy's reading handicap, more patience in dealing with the boy, and the feeling that the boy's problems were not intractable after all. During the discussions mothers sought relationships between themselves and their own problems with their sons' difficulties in reading and their inability to make satisfying and successful social adjustments.

6. Conclusions

Studholme reports that the value of group guidance sessions was quickly recognized and attested to by the mothers in statements referring to 1) reduction of feelings of isolation and shame through association with others with similar problems, 2) willingness to exercise more patience toward their sons' difficulties, and 3) some relaxation of anxiety and personal tensions.

The changes in attitude expressed by the mothers during the period they were attending the group guidance sessions, although transitory in nature, point to the value of group guidance for the mothers of retarded readers as a means of increasing the effect of the remedial instruction. As mothers ventilated their feelings toward their sons and their sons' reading failures, they gained insights into themselves. This afforded relief from some of their own personal tensions, which was probably felt by the boys in the more relaxed attitudes of their mothers toward them, resulting in more positive attitudes toward themselves as well as to improving their attitudes toward the reading lessons and toward reading.

Reading Remediation, Parent Group Meetings and Reading
Performance of Fourth Grade Children

Joan Ann Suedmeyer
Syracuse University, 1971

1. Purpose of the Study

Suedmeyer conducted this study to determine the effect of reading remediation instruction supplemented with parent group meetings and augmented reading instructional time on reading achievement and changes in attitude toward reading.

2. Description of the Sample Groups and the Program

The sample of the study consisted of thirty-two children entering Fourth Grade, possessing average or above average intelligence, but scoring below grade level on vocabulary and comprehension reading achievement measures. The children were randomly assigned to four groups. Group one children received summer reading remediation instruction supplemented by parent participation in weekly group meetings (Parent Group). Group two children received the summer reading remediation instruction augmented in time allotment per session (Augmented Instruction Group). Group three received the summer reading remediation instruction without supplementation of parent group meetings or augmentation of time allotment (Instruction Group). Group four children, the control group, received testing only (Testing Group Only). Instruction was characterized by team teaching by the same

two tutors and designed to meet individual small group and total reading skill strengths and needs.

3. Description of Parent Participation

The parents of the children in the Parent Group met for six weekly evening meetings. They participated in discussions focussed on the feelings of each child toward reading and parental attitudes and feelings concerning the reading behavior of their child.

4. Effects of the Program, Including Parent Participation, on Children's Reading Achievement

Although there were observable growth trends in vocabulary and comprehension of the Parent Group, Suedmeyer concluded from the statistical analysis of pretest and posttest reading score data that there were no statistically significant differences in the treatments established to study the effect of reading remediation instruction supplemented with parent group meetings and augmented reading instruction time.

5. Effect of the Parent Participation on Children and Parents' Attitudes Toward Reading

Statistical analysis of responses to a Semantic Differential secured at the time of pretesting and post-testing indicated that children and parents recorded feelings toward reading concepts of low, neutral, and high intensity, and that attitude changes occurred over time in the direction of the factor means. Additionally, 1) favorable parent evaluation responses to the group meetings and 2) inquiries from other parents indicating

their desire to participate in discussion groups were construed by the author to warrant further evaluation of the procedure and design of future research studies in the area of parent participation in reading.

The Influence of Parental Attitudes and Child-Parent Interaction Upon Remedial Reading Progress: A Re-Examination

Dale Alvin Sundstrom
University of Utah, 1967

1. Purpose of the Study

To teach parents how to make their emotional and intellectual interaction with their children more effective. Specifically Sundstrom sought to investigate how effective a psychological training program for parents would be in terms of increasing the reading achievement of their children, who were simultaneously receiving remedial reading instruction.

2. Description of the Sample, Program Procedure and Parent Participation

The sample consisted of forty children from Grade Three through six in two elementary schools, and the parents of half the children. The parents of the children in the Experimental Group, participated in a psychological training program emphasizing contingency management techniques. The children, of both the experimental group and the control group, were enrolled in remedial reading classes. The psychological treatment for the parents was extended over a fifteen week period. The California

Reading Test and the Filmore Oral Reading Test were used for pretesting and posttesting the children involved in the study.

3. Effects of the Parent Treatment Program on Children's Reading Achievement.

Statistical analysis of reading test results indicated that during remedial reading instruction underachievers whose parents simultaneously underwent psychological training made significantly greater gains in reading proficiency than underachievers whose parents did not undergo such training.

Helping Underachieving Readers Through Helping Their Parents

Stanton P. Thalberg
Associate Professor, College of Education
University of Washington

1. Purpose of the Study

In pursuing the hypothesis that multidisciplinary diagnosis will lead to more effective and precise therapeutic programming, Thalberg conducted an investigation into the impact that non-educational procedures would have on a population of dysfunctional readers. Thalberg sought answers to two questions: first, will the reading growth of the children in the investigation be greater as a result of educational therapy provided during this study than that of prior years, and second, instructional modifications to the children being equalized, does the impact of parental group counseling

manifest itself in increased performance of children over that of a comparable sample whose parents were denied counseling?

2. Description of the Sample and the Program

Fourteen children, found to have severe discrepancies between actual and potential reading levels, as well as severe emotional difficulties militating against maximal reading progress comprised the target population.

The fourteen children were randomly divided into two experimental treatment groups, one of which received intensive remedial reading therapy only, the control group, and the other received comparable reading help coupled with parental counseling, the experimental group. All children were matched in terms of intelligence and discrepancy between capacity for and achievement in reading.

Children in both treatment groups attended specially designed reading classes at the Regional Reading Center one hour a day, three days a week, for between ninety-one and ninety-eight instructional hours.

3. How Parents Participated

Parents of the experimental group were contacted and advised to enroll in the parent counseling sessions conducted weekly. Twelve meetings were scheduled, each of ninety minutes duration. Each set of parents exhibited one or more of the following characteristics which contributed apparently to the breakdown in the reading growth of their children.

- 1) Inordinate pressures or aspirations for the child to achieve academically.
- 2) Conflicting inter-parental reactions (one permissive, one authoritative-dictatorial parent) toward the child.
- 3) Inconsistent and ambiguous intra-parental behavior to or expectations of the child.
- 4) Inadequate or ineffectual male model for the child to identify with and establish appropriate behavioral and values structures.
- 5) The presence of a negative unregarding parent as opposed to a warm, nurturant, understanding one.
- 6) An overprotective, overindulgent, though paradoxically rejecting parent.

4. Effect of the Program on Children's Reading Achievement

Statistical analysis of pre- and posttest scores, using both informal and standardized reading tests, revealed that both groups showed significant increments of present over prior achievement on all of six reading areas addressed by the reading program. However, for the children whose emotional needs were met through parental counseling, in addition to their educational needs, significant differences were observed between the treatments in instructional, oral, and silent reading abilities. Independent Reading, Sight Vocabulary, and Word Analysis failed to achieve statistical significance despite showing observable superiority of the parent-counseling group.

5. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitude and Behavior

Through the dynamics of group interaction, the maladaptive child-rearing practices enumerated above were addressed, discussed, and totally, or in part, resolved by the seven families in attendance. The primary thrust of the parental therapy was to aid them in developing insights into the effect of the home on the academic success of the child and to devise alternative, more effective means of interrelating with their children.

6. Conclusion

Thalberg concluded that taken collectively the data clearly showed the superiority of dealing with the home as well as the school environment and instructional components.

Experimental Summaries

Program Models Categorized as Information About Reading

Parent Involvement in Reading Readiness: Development of Parent Information Program (PIP)

Robert Walter Bruinsma
Simon Fraser University
Funded by ERIBC Grants Program

1. Purpose of the Study

To develop a parent-information program intended to help parents to be aware of their role in providing reading readiness experiences for their preschool children.

2. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

Parents were contacted through preschools, nursery schools and an independent elementary school, since the target population was pre-schoolers.

3. Description of the Program and How Parents Participated

The specific components of the program centered around nine reading readiness concepts and activities that can be communicated to parents and easily implemented by them:

- 1) Talking to baby
- 2) Conversing in elaborated code
- 3) Providing a rich array of experiences
- 4) The "Lap Technique" - Exposure to books and story
- 5) Creating an awareness of the sounds of language
- 6) Developing left-right awareness -- visual training
- 7) Fostering an awareness of print
- 8) Using high interest and personal words
- 9) Encouraging the child to write.

The program, which was designed to be presented to parents of preschoolers in a one evening meeting, consists of a lecture supported by colour slides, audio tape examples of young children participating in the activities mentioned, a collection of books for preschoolers and their parents, and specially prepared handouts on reading readiness topics.

Parents were required to attend the single evening meeting, to complete a questionnaire prior to the presentation of the program, and to complete another questionnaire after the presentation.

4. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitudes and Behavior

The Parent Information Program (PIP) was presented to ninety-eight parents of preschool children. The pre- and post-presentation results on a questionnaire were compared statistically. There was a significant change in parents' perceptions of their role in reading readiness. Similarly, a significant positive change occurred in parents' attitudes toward themselves as teachers and reading models for their children.

Summer Reading: Description and Evaluation of a Program for Children and Parents

Linda B. Gambrell
Assistant Professor in the Early Childhood,
Elementary Department, University of Maryland

Mary E. Jarrell
Reading Specialist, Talbot County, Easton, Maryland

1. Purpose of the Program

In recognition of the research finding that below-average readers read very little during the summer months and that they may actually regress in their reading skills during this extended time away from school, this program was designed to 1) increase the amount of reading done over the summer by low socioeconomic students and 2) involve parents in reading with their children.

2. Description of the Participants and How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

All Title I parents in Talbot County, Maryland, were invited to enroll their children in the Summer Book Program. As a result 230 children (43% of all Title I children from kindergarten to Grade 3) were involved in the program. Parents were invited and encouraged to participate in the home visits. The parent response was greater than anticipated with 78 parents participating. The program was evaluated through the subjective judgement of teachers and aides involved, a survey of children's attitudes toward reading, and a structured interview with the parents.

3. Description of the Program and How Parents Participated

The program consisted of

1) three days of inservice for teachers and aides designed to identify easy, appropriate books to be shared with the children, to identify appropriate activities to use with children, and to identify strategies for involving and working with parents; and

2) Weekly Home Visits, whereby the procedures and ideas were implemented in the homes with the parents present.

More specifically, teachers and aides developed a list of appropriate activities which parents could use while sharing books with their children and which allowed the children to exhibit positive reading behaviors with their parents. Activities which put children in frustrating reading situations were avoided. Oral reading by the children, for example, was not used as a strategy unless the child chose to read orally. The activities were also selected because they would be easy enough for parents to use. These activities for sharing books included:

- 1) reading to the child,
- 2) sharing the reading with the child. The parent takes the responsibility for reading but the child is encouraged to read whenever possible.
- 3) read along. The child reads along with the parent.
- 4) auditory cloze. The parent stops at highly predictable words and allows the child to "fill" the meaningful word.

The children participated in at least one follow-up reading activity each week. Activities of a test-like nature were avoided. Instead of always asking the children questions about the stories, the following activities were identified by the teachers and aides for use in the program:

- 1) tell what you like best about the story,
- 2) predict what you think will happen next when the teacher, aide, or parent pauses at an appropriate point in the story,
- 3) role play an interesting part of the story,
- 4) have a puppet show about an interesting part of the story (simple bag or sock puppets were often used),
- 5) draw the most interesting or exciting part of the story and tell the teacher, aide or parent about it,
- 6) retell the story to someone else at a later time.

Each teacher or aide visited five homes per day spending approximately one hour in each home, demonstrating to parents how books can be shared with children. In some homes two or three siblings were present for the home visits. The child (or children), teacher and parent joined together for the book sharing and at least one follow-up reading activity during each visit. A variety of books were taken into each home to be shared with the children and to be left in the home until the next visit. At the conclusion of each weekly visit each participating child selected one of the books to keep. By the end of the six-week program every child owned six books.

4. Effect of the Program on Children's Attitude Toward Reading

The Heathington Attitude Scale (Alexander and Filler, 1976) was adapted to reflect the objectives of the Summer Book Program. Twenty items related to attitudes toward reading were identified for use. The items selected specifically reflected attitudes toward 1) the Summer Book Program, 2) reading in school, 3) reading at home, and 4) reading in general. Of the 230 children involved in the program, 194 completed the attitude survey, which was a 5 point Likert scale.

The highest rated item on the attitude survey was "How do you feel when you find a book that you like?" ($M = 4.95$). This indicated a very positive attitude toward reading and books in general. The second through seventh highest rated items were the six items specifically related to the Summer Book Program. These were: "How do you feel about the other activities we did, besides reading books?" ($M = 4.933$), "How do you feel about my coming to your house?" ($M = 4.897$), "How do you feel about the stories we have read together?" ($M = 4.887$), "How do you feel when you have lots of books at home?" ($M = 4.799$), "How do you feel about me bringing books to your home?" ($M = 4.706$), "How do you feel when it's time for us to read?" ($M = 4.686$). Three items which reflect attitudes toward reading in general were next, followed by attitudes toward reading in the home, and attitudes toward reading

with others. The item related to reading at school ranked comparatively low, ($M = 4.263$). The high rating received by the items relating to the Summer Book Program itself appear to indicate that the program positively affected children's attitudes toward reading.

Additional insights were gained by comparing various items on the attitude survey. The response to "How do you feel about reading out loud?" was relatively low ($M = 3.820$) compared to the response to "How do you feel when we read together?" ($M = 4.887$). According to Gambrell and Jarrell this supports the assumption made that having children read orally at home would not be perceived by them as a positive reading experience. They refer to data collected at a University of Maryland Parent Program which suggested that the most commonly used technique by parents is to have the child read orally. They suggested that their program objective of providing other book sharing alternatives for parents seems well founded in view of the results of the attitude survey.

The authors concluded that the results of the attitude survey indicated that children were most enthusiastic about the books, the activities and the teacher or aid coming to their home. The children indicated very positive attitudes toward reading with the visiting teacher or aide. According to the authors the data suggests that all aspects of the Summer Book Program were received positively by the children who participated.

5. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitude Toward Participation

The 78 parents or caregivers who participated in the Summer Book Program responded to a structured interview conducted by the visiting teacher or aide. Parent responses to the question "What do you think your child liked most about the Summer Book Program?" indicated that the children liked getting the books and having the teacher or aide visit the home. Some parents responded that their children liked "Everything!". To the question as to what parents thought was most helpful, they commented most often about having the books available in the home, and the importance of the individual help and attention for their children. Other frequently occurring comments identified involving the parents and specific ideas given to the parents as being helpful. In response to the question "Do you do anything with your child now that you did not do before the Summer Book Program?" 38% of the parents reported that they read with their children more often as a result of the program. Parents also commented on a variety of activities that they used for the first time as a result of the program (24%). A typical comment was "I've found new ways to work with my child as a result of listening to and watching you?" Parents felt their children would want to participate in the program again (85%), when asked this question. Responses to the final question, "How would you improve

this program?" were extremely positive. The most frequently occurring suggestions were: extend the length of the visits, make the program longer (the entire summer), visit more often and continue the program throughout the school year:

6. Effect of the Program on Teachers' Attitudes

Teachers and aides consistently reported that they received a warm welcome from the children and parents. Teachers frequently commented that they had positively modified their expectations of many children as a result of the program. They also expressed a better understanding of the children as a consequence of visiting in the home environment. The authors reflected on the situation years ago when it was typical for the teacher in a one room school house to visit the homes of the children. Since the home environment may provide meaningful insights into our work with children they feel that a better understanding of children is fostered through first hand experiences in the children's home environment.

In summary, the authors felt that the Summer Book Program in Talbot County, Maryland, resulted in much more than just getting books into the hands of children. The program was undoubtedly beneficial to children, parents and teachers. Children received books and special attention, parents easily saw the value of the success oriented reading activities modeled by the teachers, and the teachers grew in their insight about children and the impact of the home environment.

Effects of Parental Communication on Reading Performance of Third Grade Children

Sadie A. Grimmett, 1980

Member of the Faculty of the Institute for Child Study and Director of the Interdisciplinary Doctoral Program on Young Children, at Indiana University

Mae McCoy

Reading Resource Specialist, Responsible for Consultation and Program Development with Title 1 Reading Projects, Department of Education, U.S., Virgin Islands

1. Purpose of the Study

Dubious of the results when parents have been trained to enhance children's performance in reading, and while admitting that parent training might be one source of this benefit, the authors suggest that another source that may be overlooked may be the improved communication with the school. Accordingly, they report the results of a study designed to not only provide parents with knowledge of reading instruction but also to measure the increase in their communication with the school. Gearing their study to reflect the school's resources, they emphasized less expensive ways to stimulate parent involvement by using written material sent by mail rather than face to face training by school personnel.

Two research questions were asked: 1) Can direct techniques influence parent involvement, and 2) will enhanced involvement be associated with increased reading performance?

2. Description of the Subjects Involved in the Study and Their Assignment to Groups

The subjects were eighty-four third-grade children from a target population of lower socioeconomic families, whose parents had only one child in third grade and who consented to participate. The sample was eighty-four child/parent pairs in one school in Florida.

The child/parent pairs were randomly assigned to one of four groups, with twenty-one pairs in each group. The average age of the children was 99 months. The school received federal funds to provide remedial programs for disadvantaged children. The reading program at this school was individualized, with a specific teacher at a given grade being responsible for instruction in reading.

3. How Parents Participated in the Study

Parent involvement was defined as communication with the teacher of reading. The means of communication were developed by the authors and consisted of the following:

- 1) a description of the reading program, and 2) a communication form. The descriptive information was assembled in a ten-page booklet and included 1) goals of the reading program, 2) terminology and definitions specific to reading, (eg., diagnosis, and frustration level), and general to the school district (eg., accountability and flexible grouping), and explanations of 3) the diagnostic-prescriptive cycle, 4) instructional procedures, and 5) student profile components.

The communication form included space for names of the teacher, parent and child, and telephone number. There were five statements that could be checked to indicate the parents' concern, and an open-ended statement.

- 1) I am interested in assisting my child in reading. Please send suggestions or materials.
- 2) I would like to request a conference concerning my child's reading.
- 3) I would appreciate information on the following aspects of my child's reading.
- 4) I am pleased with the progress my child is making in your class. Feel free to contact me about continued progress.
- 5) In general my child has shown a positive attitude toward the reading instruction received in your class.

4. Procedures

One-fourth of the parents received both the descriptive booklet on reading and communicative forms, designated the (DC) group. One-fourth of the parents received only the descriptive booklet on reading, the (D) group, whereas another one-fourth received only the communication forms, the (C) group. The parents in the contrast group (N) received forms with only spaces for names and phone numbers. Of those parents given forms, each received ten copies.

The reading teacher was provided a locked box with a slot in which to place correspondence, as well as carbon-backed stationery for replying to any parent request. The reply was attached to the original request and placed in the box. All communications and replies from all parents

were retained in the box. The teacher was informed that the investigation was to determine the frequency and nature of parent-initiated communications to the school, and was unaware of group assignment and the information provided the parents.

5. Effect of the Study on Children's Reading Achievement

Statistical analysis of the reading scores gained through the use of a pretest and posttest on the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test, Primary "C", forms 1 and 2, indicated that whereas at the beginning of the study there had been no significant differences among the groups, the posttest revealed significantly higher reading scores among the children in the DC group, for both vocabulary and comprehension, while the scores on each of vocabulary and comprehension tests for the other three groups did not differ. Furthermore, frequencies of school communications were correlated with posttest scores.

6. Effect of the Study on Parent Participation

With 21 parents in each group, the communication results were:

Group N:	1 parent sent 1 communication
Group D:	1 parent, 1 communication
Group C:	14 parents, 15 communications
Group DC:	19 parents, 50 communications

It was obvious that only the DC and C parents had made noticeable efforts to communicate with the school. Also those who had received both the booklet explaining the reading program and the communication forms, the (DC).

group, and those who received the 10 copies of the communicative forms only (C) were notably more stimulated to correspond with the reading teacher. The authors presumed that the DC parents who requested reading materials or specifics on their child's reading progress reflected a qualitative change in their behavior with the child. Specific changes in parent behavior were unknown in this study, since the procedure minimized intrusion into the daily routines of these parents, which contributed to the lack of specificity about parent behavior.

7. Conclusions

The results suggest that parent involvement can influence the child's reading when parents receive information about the reading program. Improvement in reading after such a short period of time - two months - is usually negligible and statistically insignificant. The success of the combined indirect techniques used here in benefiting short-term reading performance attest to the power of parental support of the teacher.

The Effect of a Parent Information Program Upon Reading Achievement in First Grade

Frederick William MacLaren
University of Oklahoma, 1965

1. Purpose of the Study

To determine whether or not providing parents with information about the process of learning to read, along with a short-term program of parental guidance concerning beginning reading, significantly influences the reading achievement of First Grade pupils.

2. Description of the Sample

Subjects for the investigation were seventy-two caucasian children who were enrolled in six first grade classes of three public elementary schools. Two groups of 36 subjects each, matched according to sex and intelligence, were assigned to a control group and an experimental group.

3. Description of the Program and Parent Participation

The parents of the experimental subjects attended six weekly classes to consider such topics as reading readiness, individual differences among children, emotional aspects of learning to read, and instructional methods. The parents of control subjects received no special guidance.

4. Effectiveness of the Parent Information Program on the Reading Achievement of the Experimental Group of Students

Statistical analysis of the data obtained from the Gates Primary Reading Tests at the end of the year, which measured word recognition ability and total reading achievement, revealed 1) no significant difference between experimental and control groups in word recognition ability, 2) a significant difference favoring the experimental group in sentence reading ability, paragraph reading ability, and total reading achievement.

Acting upon the positive value of the experimental parent information program, as evidenced by the results of the investigation, MacLaren recommended that

- 1) the merits and means of informing parents of preschool and kindergarten children about the relationship of early experiences to future success in reading be considered;
- 2) the resources available to elementary schools should be assessed to determine whether or not it is feasible to conduct organized study groups for parents of first grade pupils, and
- 3) where it is not practical to plan and conduct systematic information programs, materials which explain and interpret essential concepts concerning the school reading program should be prepared and distributed to parents of beginning readers.

A Comparative Study of the Reading Achievement of Second Grade Pupils in Programs Characterized by a Contrasting Degree of Parent Participation

Elizabeth McIntyre Ryan
Indiana University, 1964

1. Purpose of the Study

To compare -

- 1) the reading achievement at the second grade level in situations where contrast in the degree of parental participation was characterized by (a) a planned program of parent participation, and (b) by incidental participation of parents;
- 2) the initial reading patterns in the homes of the group having parent participation in the reading program with the reading patterns of the same group at the close of the study; and
- 3) the reading patterns in the homes of the group having a planned program of parent participation with the reading patterns of the group having incidental parent participation.

2. Description of the Sample, the Program Procedure, and Parent Participation

The subjects for the experiment included one hundred and sixteen pupils in an experimental group and their parents, as well as one hundred and sixteen pupils in a control group, all from the public schools of Evanville, Indiana. The experimental group had a planned program for reading at home which involved the parents, while the control group had incidental parent participation in the reading program. Recognized tests were used to determine the readiness of the pupils in October, 1963, and to measure reading achievement in March, 1964.

Analysis of covariance was used to test for differences

between the experimental and the control groups.

Questionnaires were employed to determine the reading patterns in the homes of pupils and to give parents and teachers an opportunity to evaluate the planned program of parent participation.

3. The Effect of the Parent Involvement in the Home Reading Program on Pupils' Reading Achievement

Statistical analysis of tests revealed that

(a) the experimental group was significantly superior to the control group on the Word Meaning Test, and

(b) there were no significant differences between the experimental group and the control group on the Paragraph Meaning Test.

4. The Effect of the Parent Involvement in the Home Reading Program on Pupils' Reading Patterns

The results of the questionnaire revealed that both the experimental and the control groups liked to read, but that the experimental group read more extensively, visited the library more frequently with parents and expected less help with new words from parents than did the control group.

5. The Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitude Toward Participation

Ryan reports that both teachers and parents reacted favorably toward the home reading program and that very few negative reactions were found.

6. Conclusions

Ryan concluded that (1) the superiority of the home reading program in the area of word meanings suggests that this program has much to offer during the early school

years, helping to increase the child's vocabulary;

(2) that children who are in groups where there is a home reading program are highly motivated to read extensively at home and to visit the library with parents; (3) that the favorable acceptance of the home reading program by teachers and parents suggests that many other teachers and parents may find such a program of value to the children, and (4) that this favorable acceptance of the home reading program by parents and teachers suggest that this is a good area for closer cooperation between the home and school and that such a program tends to develop good home-school relations.

Augmenting Grade Three Reading Achievement

Hubert Smith
Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1979

1. Purpose of the Study

To investigate experimentally the relationship between self-concept of ability and reading achievement, and to determine whether Grade Three students in rural Newfoundland would improve their self-concept of ability and, indirectly, reading achievement, as a consequence of working closely with parents and teachers.

2. Description of the Sample

The study involved thirty Grade Three students (the experimental group) from one school in rural Newfoundland, along with their parents, and twenty-five Grade-Three

students from another rural school. These fifty-five students were performing at or below the class average, according to their performance on a standardized reading achievement test.

3. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

Parents were encouraged to attend an initial general meeting to explain the whole study and its purpose, through the medium of a letter sent home via the students. Just prior to the meeting parents were contacted by telephone and urged to attend.

4. Description of the Program and How Parents Participated

The treatment period was extended over a period of three months and consisted of various means of attempting to raise the child's reading ability by enhancing his/her academic self-concept through working with parents and teachers. Parents were expected to attend general meetings and individual conferences with teachers.

The general meetings centered around guest speakers and a film "Reading is the Family". The topics treated and discussed afterwards included 1) emphasizing the importance of the home in educating children; 2) the importance of motivating children to read, over the actual ability to read; 3) the importance of reading in the curriculum; 4) things parents can do at home to teach children to read; and 5) the relationship between reading and self-concept.

The individual conferences were held with each parent. During the conferences with parents, sometimes with the children present, the teachers discussed how parents could help the child at home with problems related to his reading ability, and parents committed themselves to carrying out some reading related activity with the child at home. Teachers suggested and supplied various practical types of learning materials for this purpose. The conferences were intended to encourage parents to become actively involved in the school work of the child and encourage the child to do better.

5. Effect of the Experimental Treatment on Children's Self-Concept and Reading Achievement

Although there was an increase in the self-concept of ability of the children in the experimental group and their academic self-concept of ability as a result of the treatment, this increase was not found to be significant. Both the control and experimental groups showed significant improvement in their scores on reading achievement tests, but the increase for the experimental group was not significantly greater than the increase in performance by the control group and therefore could not be accounted for by the experimental treatment.

6. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitude and Behavior and Their Implications

The study resulted in three findings that have important implications with respect to the impact parents may have on their children. First, an analysis of data

indicated that parents had made significant improvement in their assessment of the child's self-concept. The implication follows that once parents were presented with the idea of self-concept and the importance it plays in both the academic and non-academic life of the child they were quick and accurate in evaluating their own view of their children and significantly improved their perception of the child's self-concept.

Second, it was found at the end of the study that a strong relationship existed between the parents' perception of how the teacher would rate the child's ability and the teacher's perception of how the parent would rate the child's ability, a relationship that did not exist before the experiment. Smith notes the implication of this finding on the importance of congruences of pressure on the child by the home and the school. He cites other sources, Roe (1971) and Dave (1963) to support the claim that if both parents and teachers are in agreement as to the present ability level of the child then both groups can work together to try to improve the situation. If, however, differences exist in their perceptions of the child's ability, this situation of cross pressures could create a problem for the child. He would perceive it as a double set of standards of expectations.

Third, at the conclusion of the experiment there existed a significant relationship between self-concept of ability and each of reading achievement and total

reading scores, a relationship nonexistent prior to commencement of the experiment. The implication, according to Smith, is that if parents and teachers want to improve the scholastic performance of a child the most profitable and direct means of achieving this is to direct their efforts toward the enhancement of the child's self-concept.

Finally, one of the measures of the experiment involved examining the attitude of parent participants in the program after its termination. Of the parents of the thirty students in the experimental group, eighty-three percent, or twenty-five parents attended the final individual conference with the researcher. Further, a questionnaire to parents revealed that parents overwhelmingly supported the program, with the majority indicating a willingness to participate in the study because it provided an organized method by which parents could help their children with school work.

School and Home - Focus on Achievement

Mildred Beatty Smith
Coordinator of Curriculum Services
Flint County Schools
Flint, Michigan

1. Purpose of the Program

An experimental program designed to raise the academic level of children who were achieving at a lower level than they should have been. The program hoped to accomplish this goal by linking home and school; by requiring that parents and teachers work together to improve children's basic attitudes toward academic work and to improve their work habits in school. These objectives were designed to be carried out by helping academically uninterested parents develop or raise their expectations of their children by providing a climate at home that is conducive to study.

2. Description of the Subjects

The experiment was undertaken in two elementary schools during the 1961-62 academic year. Most of the children in the experimental schools were Negroes, primarily from low income families living in the industrial city of Flint, Michigan. It involved approximately one thousand children enrolled in kindergarten through Grade Six. For evaluation purposes, however, a third elementary school served as a control school, with children of similar backgrounds.

3. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

After teachers had developed the program, meetings of parents were scheduled for the purpose of explaining the

program to them and asking them to participate. PTA meetings were held in the evening and also during the day to accommodate these parents working the evening shift. Some of the techniques used to attract parents to these meetings included the following:

- 1) Interested mothers assigned blocks in their school district to themselves and each made a personal call on every family in her assigned block, inviting parents to a planned program to "learn what they could do to help their children achieve better in school;
- 2) A single-sheet bulletin on colourful paper containing the time, place and objective of the meeting was left at the home just in case parents forgot.
- 3) Home room mothers telephoned every parent in the school.
- 4) A trophy was loaned to the class with the highest percentage of parents in attendance at a meeting. Other classes competed to get the trophy away from the last winner. Children enjoyed the competition and more and more parents were in attendance at these meetings.

A bulletin provided to each parent who attended the meetings contained a list of objectives of the program. The parents were made to understand that without being aware of it they might not be setting the kind of example that brings about desirable attitudes and habits toward school work.

4. Description of the Program

Although attention was given to mathematics, reading was designated as a most crucial subject, since it was felt that the mastery of reading greatly influences success in other subjects. The components of the program

included the following:

- 1) The home study assignment: - each family was asked to set aside a quiet time in the home each day so that children could do homework assignments. Teachers provided materials for these daily assignments consisting primarily of studying vocabulary, reading from supplementary materials, studying spelling words, and reading trade books.
- 2) A dictionary for each family.
- 3) The "Read-To-Me" program. Parents were asked to read aloud to their children each day for the purpose of stimulating interest in reading and showing the children that reading is important to their parents.
- 4) Summer activities to focus on achievement.
- 5) Materials provided for teachers and pupils, to improve children's learning and to motivate teachers and raise their morale.
- 6) Occupational information. As a result of a student survey to determine their occupational and educational aspirations and expectations, a decision was made to integrate occupational information into social studies programs for all fourth, fifth and sixth grades.
- 7) Clerical assistance provided teachers.
- 8) An inservice program for teachers.

5. How Parents Participated at Home

Parents were expected to:

- 1) provide a quiet time in the home each day for reading and assigned study for the teacher,
- 2) listen to their children read,
- 3) read regularly themselves, in the presence of their children,
- 4) read aloud regularly to their children, including pre-school age children,

- 5) show interest in their children's work by asking questions, giving praise and encouragement when needed and deserved,
- 6) prevent the school age child's work from being damaged or destroyed by preschool children,
- 7) see that the child has pencil and paper at school and at home so that he has the tools necessary for doing a good job,
- 8) get the child to bed regularly each night so that he gets the proper sleep and rest,
- 9) get the child up each morning with adequate time for a good breakfast,
- 10) remind the child of work papers and books that should be returned to school,
- 11) have the child leave home with the attitude of going to school for the purpose of learning.

6. Effect of the Parent Participation Program on the Reading Achievement of the Children Involved

Statistical analysis of the reading tests scores administered five months apart to all second and fifth grade students in the experimental schools and the control school, with a five month normal reading gain expectancy, showed that the children in the experimental schools made overall gains of 5.3 months in reading during the five month period. Children in the control school showed overall gains of 2.8 months in reading during this period.

7. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitude Toward Participation

Informal techniques utilized to evaluate the program indicated that parents felt the program helped the children with school work, that they would like to have the program continued, and that it helped to improve their own skills.

8. Effect of the Program on Teachers

Smith reports that the multilevel self-help materials were considered especially beneficial by the teachers, and that support from home brought about an improved social-psychological climate in the classroom. Furthermore, teachers noted improvement in their children's work habits and in their attitude toward school work.

9. Conclusions

Smith concluded that the contention that these parents were not interested in their children was not supported; in fact, it was overwhelmingly refuted. She goes on to say that her findings suggest that appropriate techniques is an important factor in involving parents with limited educational backgrounds in improving the academic achievement of their children. Consequently, she suggests that the role for educators is seen to be that of teaching ~~parents~~ parents to assume their appropriate responsibilities and assist them in this task.

The Effect of Parental Involvement on the Reading Attitudes
Toward Reading of Children Who Are Receiving Additional Help
in Reading Beyond the Regular Classroom

M. Louise Stabler
Lehigh University, 1969

1. Purpose of the Study

This study was an attempt to verify research findings that children in corrective reading programs, who make greater gains and who develop more positive attitudes toward reading than other children enrolled in similar programs, often do so because they have been favorably influenced by parental involvement in their reading activities. Stabler investigated the effect of parent conferences as a tool for developing parental attitudes in order to determine their effect upon the reading achievement and reading attitudes of children who were receiving help in reading beyond the regular classroom. Specifically she tested the following hypotheses:

1. Children in the experimental group will make more significant gains in reading achievement than children in the control group.
2. Children in the experimental group will develop more positive attitudes toward reading than children in the control group.

2. Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of seventy children, randomly selected in the Pocono Mountain School District, who were receiving corrective reading instruction from three qualified reading teachers. There were thirty-five children in each of the experimental and control groups.

3. Description of the Program and Parent Participation

Parents of the children in the experimental group were invited to attend three one-hour individual conferences with the investigator, plus one group conference with the librarian, in an attempt to involve them in reading activities with their children. Parents of the children in the control group were not invited to attend the conferences.

4. Effect of the Experimental Treatment on Children's Reading Achievement and Attitude Toward Reading

Statistical analysis of the reading tests data, with respect to hypothesis one, was that no significant differences in reading achievement was found between the children in the experimental and control groups. With respect to hypothesis two, statistical analysis of a Children's Attitude Scale indicated that the children in the experimental group developed more positive attitudes toward reading than the children in the control group.

5. Effect of the Treatment on Parents' Attitudes and Support for Their Children's Reading

A descriptive analysis of a Home Information Report, completed by parents, indicated that: -

1. The children in the experimental group were provided with more reading materials at home than the children in the control group.
2. The children in the experimental group were encouraged to read more at home than the children in the control group.
3. The parents and children in the experimental group did not use library facilities more than the parents and children in the control group.

4. The number of adults in the homes of the children in the experimental group who helped and encouraged their children with reading activities was greater than the number of adults in the homes of the children in the control group who helped and encouraged their children with reading activities.

An Experimental Study of the Effects of Parent Workshops on the Reading Achievement of Primary Grade Children

Margaret O'Carroll Waters
Fordham University, 1967

1. Purpose of the Study

To determine, by a parallel-group experiment, whether or not the reading achievement of children in Grades two and three is significantly improved by conducting reading workshops for parents, and to ascertain the opinions of the participating parents concerning the benefits they obtained from the workshop program.

2. Description of the Sample, the Program Procedure, and How Parents Participated

The subjects were pupils in the Second and Third Grades of two parochial schools. The control group was composed of two hundred and nineteen pupils from one school whose parents did not attend the workshops. The experimental group, three hundred and five pupils from the other school, was divided into four categories according to the frequency of attendance of their parents at the workshops.

Standardized tests of intelligence and reading were administered prior to and after the experiment, to

establish the amount of reading progress. At the end a questionnaire was distributed to all parents of the experimental group.

The program consisted of ten systematic reading workshops, conducted for the parents, with each workshop being devoted to a different topic regarding reading.

3. Effect of the Experimental Treatment Involving Parents on the Reading Achievement of Their Children

The analysis of data regarding reading achievement indicated that pupils whose parents attended workshops in reading improved their reading ability. The improvements, however, were not significantly different from the results of the control group.

4. Effect of the Experimental Program on Parents

The responses on the parent questionnaire were analyzed. Parents reported that they received benefits from the workshops in twelve areas. The value of the workshop topics to parents was expressed in 1,069 evaluations of the ten workshop topics. Six hundred seventy-seven were ratings of "valuable". Three hundred forty-five were ratings of "good", and forty-seven were ratings of "less valuable".

Experimental Summaries

Program Models Categorized as Parents Teach Own Child

Using Parents as Teaching Partners

Annette Breiling

The author develops parent programs and trains teachers to conduct them through Title I ESEA, Montgomery County Public Schools, Maryland

1. Purpose of the Study

A Title I compensatory program for the disadvantaged, to pilot ways in which parents could be involved as teaching partners in the reading process. This Title I program was unlike other larger ones in that it endeavored to offer services that could be incorporated by a school reading teacher or specialist if a day or half a day a week were scheduled for helping parents help their children.

2. Description of the Subjects Involved in the Program

The program was intended for parents of children from twelve schools in Montgomery County, ranging from kindergartens through fourth graders, the age and grade range varying from school to school.

3. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

As a result of a survey sent to Title I parents in fifteen elementary schools in the Montgomery County in the spring of 1974, which found that the greatest response from parents was a need to learn what they could do to help their children with reading skills, the author and

others began to plan for parent involvement. They planned Parents in Reading meetings for interested Title I parents, and Reading at Home program for parents who were not being reached through Parents in Reading meetings. A high interest feature which attracted many parents was having the children come to the meeting to read for a few minutes, with a "reading party" at the end for all the children who participated in previous meetings. Attendance was increased when child care was arranged for in a separate room in the school. Meetings were arranged to be held in the daytime or evening to further facilitate parent attendance. For the more reluctant parents it required several weekly telephone calls to persuade them to attend the meetings.

4. Description of the Program and How Parents Participated

The program was intended to be comprehensive in scope with respect to involving as many parents as possible. The main thrust relied upon Parents in Reading meetings for interested Title I parents. Individual Parent Work and Reading at Home Programs attempted to reach the parents who were not attending meetings.

The Parents in Reading program consisted of a series of approximately five meetings on alternate weeks, intended for parents of children ranging from kindergarten to fourth grade. The goals of the meetings included 1) making parents comfortable in school, 2) making parents aware of the potential importance of the role

they play with their children, and 3) providing parents with specific materials and ideas for helping their children at home.

To develop a healthy respect for and appreciation for the task their children must accomplish parents attending the first meeting were put into the shoes of a child just learning to read, through Paul McKee's, *A Primer for Parents* (1966). Parents were helped to facilitate their child's reading success through offering increased exposure to written language in interesting, meaningful ways, just as they helped to facilitate the child's speaking success by constantly exposing them to spoken language in interesting, meaningful ways. Other activities introduced at the meetings included:

- 1) Books written at their children's reading level were given to parents and they were asked to help their children read for ten minutes each night.
- 2) Homemade reading games, supplementing reading skills, were made and played at each meeting, so that parents could take home at least one reading game to play with their children.
- 3) At each meeting parents shared the experiences they had when helping their children at home with previously supplied materials.
- 4) Explanation of some key feature of the reading program by the school reading teacher.
- 5) Having children come to read for a few minutes at each meeting. At the end a "reading party" was held to invite all children to read and he applauded.

The Individual Parent Work aspect of the parent involvement program purported to reach parents who could not conveniently come to the Parents in Reading meeting. This involved the group leader working with parents individually at school, when a mutually convenient time was arranged. For example, one fourth grader, whose teacher noted his difficulties with phonics, was reading a year and a half below grade level. His mother, unable to attend the meetings, came to the school several afternoons to meet with the boy and the instructor, resulting in the boy's confidence in word attack skills.

The Reading at Home Program was considered the easiest way to involve all parents with minimal output by teachers. All children took home a book at their reading level with a motivating technique, a certificate, to ensure that the child read ten minutes for his parents. This was followed up by an award system whereby the child was eligible for a prize from the treasure chest. The treasure chest, donated by a local business was brought around weekly or biweekly.

5. Effect of the Parents in Reading Meetings on Their Children's Reading Achievement and Reading Behavior

Children were tested at the beginning and at the end with the Botel Word Recognition Test. The majority of children showed more gain than would ordinarily be expected in a two-month interval. In a few cases more than an entire grade level of growth had been shown in

sight vocabulary, while in a few more cases no gain was reflected at all. Visible improvement by about three-fourths of the children in the areas of reading skills, attitude, and improved self-confidence and self-image had been noted by teacher. Principals of the twelve schools having the program were unanimous in rating the program of value in meeting their schools' reading objectives.

6. Effect of the Parents in Reading Meetings on Parents

Overall parent responses to the meetings were enthusiastic. Practically all parents, through comments, reported seeing improvement in their children's interest and/or ability in reading. Some parents who were reluctant to participate initially expressed regret in not showing up sooner, and recruited others to come to the next year's program.

7. Effect of the Individual Parent Work on Children's Reading and Parents' Attitude

Parents and children were thrilled when children could read at grade level at the end of the year.

8. Effect of the Home Reading Program on Children's Reading Achievement and Behavior.

Striking gains were seen on the Botel Word Recognition test given at the beginning of the Reading at Home Program and repeated two months later. At two schools which conducted this program a spirit of excitement spread through grade one through six, and the mean gain in sight vocabulary for the Title I children was half a grade level.

9. Effect of the Home Reading Program on Parents' Attitude

Parents noted increased enthusiasm, improved reading, and more confidence among children. Practically all parents, who turned in evaluation forms on the program felt their children would benefit from a similar program in the next year.

10. Conclusions

Other ideas considered by the group who sought parent involvement in reading in the Montgomery County Public Schools for the future include these:

- 1) A game lending library in schools, so that reading related games may remain in school for parents to sign out. One school's Parent Teacher Association assisted here.
- 2) Home learning kits - envelopes containing home-made reading games to be sent home.
- 3) Improving feedback to parents regarding their children's progress, such as weekly progress checklists.

The author felt that all the above ideas and the other aspects of the parent participation program for involving parents as teaching partners in reading can reap benefits far greater and more long-lasting than trying to work solely with the children.

Beginning Reading in Denver

Joseph Brzeinski, 1964

Supervisor in the Department of General Curriculum Services
of the Denver Public Schools
Aided by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York

1. Purpose of the Study

To determine how effectively parents, with suitable professional assistance and direction, could systematize and accentuate the informal activities carried on by parents for years to prepare their preschool children for reading.

2. Description of the Treatment Groups and How Parents Participated

Three research groups were established. The first group was called Group X. Parents of the children in this group received no instruction in teaching the basic reading skills. In Group Y the parents were provided instruction in teaching the basic beginning reading skills. They taught their children at home using a specially prepared guidebook and programs presented on educational television. The parents of children in Group Z were provided instruction in teaching the basic skills to their children at home by the use of the guidebook, along with the guidance of experienced teachers, using kinescopes of the television programs in small parent-discussion groups.

3. Description of the Program

The guidebook for parents, *Preparing Your Child for*

Reading, presented the basic instructional plan. The method used in the study was developed by Paul McKee and M. Lucille Harrison of Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado. The method makes use of oral words the child already knows so that he can learn the skills which are basic to beginning reading. It is made up of the following steps:

- 1) Giving children practice in using something said (spoken or read) to call to mind any word that could come next to make sense.
- 2) Giving children practice in listening for consonant sounds at the beginning of words spoken (by parent or child) to teach what is meant by the beginning of a spoken word.
- 3) Giving children practice in distinguishing the letter forms from one another and learning letter names.
- 4) Teaching children the letter-sound associations for certain consonants.
- 5) Giving children practice in using together something said (spoken or read aloud) and the beginning consonant letter or letters (shown) to call to mind a word that is omitted.
- 6) Giving children practice in using together something said (spoken or read aloud) and the beginning consonant letter or letters in a printed word (shown) to decide what that word is.

4. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

The organization of the Denver Public Schools included an established preschool program with parents and children in attendance, from which subjects for this study could readily be recruited. The support of the Denver County Council of Parent Teacher Associations was also enlisted to inform people of the study and to set up suggested

operational procedures on the local school level. With the assistance of the PTA and preschool teachers, a significant number of parent volunteers, along with their children, were obtained.

5. Effect of the Program on Preparing Children for Beginning Reading

The experimental groups of children showed significantly greater gains than the control group in letter names and sounds, sight word recognition, and ability to identify words by using the beginning sound and context. The study indicated that these certain beginning reading skills can be taught to a preschool child, provided he has a mental age of at least four and a half years. Statistically significant gains in achievement, however, were made by those children who practiced thirty minutes or more per week. Reading to the child was also found to have a significant effect.

6. Effect of the Program on Parental Interest and Its Relationship to Performance

Parents involved in the project gave it overwhelming approval. Over eighty-five percent indicated on questionnaires that this was a good method for teaching the beginning reading skills. More than eighty percent thought the instruction they received was helpful for themselves and for their children. About seventy percent said they would like more of this kind, and more than seventy-five percent stated they intended to continue practising the beginning reading activities.

An Experiment to Study the Effectiveness of School Directed Parental Assistance to Elementary School Pupils with Reading Problems

Robert Dale Buckner
University of Nebraska, 1972

1. Purpose of the Study

To determine 1) whether parents of children with reading difficulties could be of more direct help to their children by assisting at home with materials recommended by the school, and 2) whether higher reading achievement and more positive parental attitudes would result from a planned program of directing parental assistance and reinforcement of the parents. Buckner hypothesized that children whose parents had received directions and reinforcement for participating in reading related activities would achieve higher than the children of other parents not in the sample, and that parents who participate in the planned program would have more positive attitude than other parents in the sample.

2. Description of the Sample

The sample was composed of eighty pupils with reading problems enrolled in grades three through six in the same elementary school, and their mothers. All mothers had agreed that their children needed additional reading help and had volunteered to try to help them. The children were assigned to one of four groups, in a manner which resulted in groups comparable in reading achievement and years of school experience.

3. Description of the Program and the Amount of Parental Participation

Parent participation involved assisting their children at home for six weeks, with a reading activity selected for each week by the school reading consultant.

The four groups were treated experimentally as follows:

Group I parents received one of the reading activities each week with instructions. Parent and pupil participation were assisted and reinforced each week by verbal praise, suggestions, a letter of appreciation from the principal and a token gift for the child, contingent upon successful performance.

Group II parents received the same reading activities and written instructions as Group I, but none of the devices intended to provide assistance and reinforcement of parent-child participation were employed.

Group III parents received no reading activities from the school, but each week the mother received a telephone call from the school representative expressing interest in what the mother and child were doing at home related to reading.

Group IV served as a control group and received no experimental treatment.

4. Effect of the Experimental Parent Participation Treatment on Children's Reading Achievement

Statistical analysis of the data collected through the use of a posttest at the conclusion of the six week experimental period indicated no significant differences in reading performance attributable to the experimental treatment.

5. Effect of the Experimental Parental Participation Treatment on Parental Attitude Toward the Teacher, the School and Reading Instruction

Analysis of a two-part questionnaire, part one

yielding subjective information, part two measuring attitude toward the concepts of school, teacher, and reading instruction, indicated that with respect to part two, there were significant differences in parent attitudes. Further analysis pinpointed the differences in attitude to be differences toward the concept reading instruction and not the concepts of school and teacher. With respect to part one, subjective findings were 1) parents want the school to help them assist their child, 2) the planned program appeared to have had a beneficial teaching effect inasmuch as the experimental Group I parents' responses were more specific to the reading needs of their children and less negative toward the program.

The Effectiveness of Learning Games Used By Economically Disadvantaged Parents to Increase the Reading Achievement of Their Children

Blanche Edwards Clegg,
University of Washington, 1971

1. Purpose of the Study

To determine the effectiveness of reading games used by economically disadvantaged parents to increase the reading achievement of their children, specifically vocabulary, comprehension, and composite reading.

2. Description of the Program and How Parents Participated

The program consisted of eight games, constructed by the experimenter, to provide motivation and a

particular communication style. Specifically, the games utilized planned dialogue imitating the middle class school language. Parents were required to play these learning games with their children using the directions and planned dialogue.

3. Description of the Sample and the Experimental Design

The subjects for this experiment were thirty Second Grade children from a predominantly black, low-socio-economic district in the Seattle central area. The children were randomly selected from two classrooms with no significant differences in reading scores, and randomly assigned to three groups, the Experimental Group and Internal and External Control Groups. The experimental design for the study was a randomized group, pretest-posttest, two control group design.

4. Effect of the Experimental Parent Participation Program on Children's Reading Achievement

Statistical tests revealed, among others, that the children in the experimental treatment who had played the learning games with their parents achieved scores that resulted in significant differences for vocabulary and composite reading, but not for comprehension scores.

The experimenter concluded that learning games used by economically-disadvantaged parents increased the reading achievement scores of their children, that these games provide useful tools for learning, and that they are techniques for the school to involve the parent in the learning process.

My Mom Can Teach Reading Too

Ward Cramer, 1971

Developed by the Psychology Department, Indiana University.
Funded by Title I, Elementary and Secondary Education Act
of 1965, U.S.A.

1. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to compare the achievement of two groups of beginning first-graders who ranked in the lowest percentiles of a standardized readiness test administered in September, 1969, who according to the manual for the Metropolitan Readiness Tests, (Form A, Revised Edition), were "not ready" for reading instruction. The intent was to compare both groups after one group received programmed tutoring by parents.

2. Description of the Subjects Involved in the Study, and Their Assignment into Groups

The subjects were eighty first-graders who, as indicated above, were not ready for reading instruction, according to their scores on a standardized reading test. The pupils were randomly assigned in pairs, one child to the experimental group, the other to the control, until all had been assigned. Tutored pupils received classroom instruction identical with that of the non-tutored, or control group pupils. The non-tutored received the traditional Basal reading program; the experimental group received the same reading program from the same teachers plus supplementary programmed tutoring by their parents.

3. Description of the Procedures, the Program and How Parents Participated

Through the means of funding provided by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, U.S., mothers were given thirty-five hours of group instruction in programmed tutoring, a highly structured form of individualized instruction given in daily sessions of fifteen minutes each, designed to supplement the classroom teaching of beginning reading. Mothers were trained to teach children to recognize words and letters by sight-reading method, to use phonics and context clues in word analysis, and to develop six comprehension skills by the use of word, sentence, paragraph, and larger textual units. Children were allowed to progress at their own rate through a careful sequence of basic reading skills, with acquisition of each skill element based on mastery of previously learned elements. Using a discovery approach, mothers were to deemphasize failure by proceeding from difficult tasks to progressively easier tasks to ensure success.

The programmed tutoring was designed to be implemented by mothers, trained as teacher aides, and operating within the school. It required few facilities. Aides and their pupils were not necessarily isolated from other children, as long as there was a reasonably quiet and adequately lighted area.

4. Effect of the Program on Children's Reading Achievement

Using a pretest-posttest design, posttest scores were available for thirty of the forty original pairs. Tutored pupils received classroom reading instruction identical to that of non-tutored pupils, but the experimental group also received supplementary programmed tutoring by parents. Results indicate that in Word Knowledge and Reading Comprehension the performance of the tutored group was significantly greater than that of the control group. Although the experimental group had a higher mean score than the control group in Word Discrimination, the difference was not significant.

5. Conclusion

The author concludes that programmed tutoring, administered by parent aides, from October until the end of the year, results in significantly greater reading achievement than classroom instruction alone.

Pepper - A Spicy New Program

Linda J. Duncan

Title I teacher in the PEPPER program at Palmer Elementary School, Springfield, whose interest is improving reading achievement through parental involvement.

Barbara VonBehren

Reading teacher at Palmer Elementary School, Springfield

1. Purpose of the program

To "spice up" a second grade class interest in reading by involving parents in teacher made reading games and reading activities.

2. Description of the Subjects in the Program

The need for the program was indicated by numerous reading problems of children in a low socioeconomic neighborhood, with a majority of parents dependent on welfare, evidenced by low scores on standardized reading tests and a severe loss of achievement during the summer. Low reading levels were accompanied by a lack of parent support. One second grade class from Palmer Elementary School in Springfield was selected as the experimental group, whose parents became involved in the treatment program, and another second grade class was selected as a control group, whose parents were not involved in the treatment program.

3. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

Invitations to parents to attend the meetings adhered to these guidelines: 1) the use of language that all parents could understand without insult to those having more education; 2) the assumption that parents WOULD

participate rather than the presentation of an option for refusal; 3) emphasis upon the fact that children would be the benefactors; and 4) an avoidance of the term "meeting" to reduce negative attitudes. In a further attempt to attract parents meetings were held in homes. According to Duncan and VonVehren, previous research had indicated that meetings with parents in their own environment was preferable.

4. Description of the Program and How Parents Participated

The program, PEPPER, an acronym for "Parent Education Program to Pep-up Every Reader", was stretched over a twenty week period and was aimed at fostering improvement in both student achievement in reading and parental attitudes. Parents were encouraged, through attending scheduled meetings at parents' homes, and at the school during noon hours to guide and tutor their children at home by focusing upon sight word drill and practice in oral reading. The limited scope was planned as an effort to avoid parental frustration, as might be experienced by concentrating on more complex and abstract reading skills.

The program consisted of parents spending fifteen to thirty minutes daily working with their children using activities prepared by teachers and presented to parents at each meeting. The materials included flash cards of the two hundred and twenty Dolch sight words, simplified

crossword puzzles, a set of blank flash cards, and games. At each meeting parents were given fifteen to twenty flash cards, different for each child according to needs, as determined by a pretest, five simplified crossword puzzles for additional practice using the words in context, blank flash cards on which the child could duplicate his words, one board-type game and one new card game for each student. The games were designed for mastery and drill and could be used with any set of sight words. Parents played several rounds of each game at the meetings to familiarize themselves with the games they took home a printed copy of directions.

Parents and children were motivated to participate by requiring the child to place an animal sticker on the appropriate place on a monthly calendar (both kinds of material supplied) every time PEPPER activities were performed. Because all games, flash cards, calendar and puzzles were teacher made, expenses were negligible. To further motivate the child and to enhance self-concepts, parents were cautioned to provide a relaxed atmosphere, free from pressures, to respect the child, adopt a positive approach, break the time into separate activities, to refrain from scolding, begging or bribing, and to read themselves as well as to read to their child.

5. Effect of the Program on Children's Reading Achievement

Stanford Achievement Test scores revealed that PEPPER resulted in word meaning improvements varying from .8 to

2.4 years by children who participated regularly in the program and paragraph meaning gains ranging from .6 to 2.0 years. Results for the control group on the same tests ranged from .4 to 1.5 years and from .2 to 1.3 years for word meaning and paragraph meaning gains respectively.

6. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitudes

An attitude questionnaire prior to the beginning of the program indicated favorable attitudes toward PEPPER and a desire to participate to help children, but a lack of knowledge about what to do. After the program there were numerous indications that PEPPER was being implemented in the homes. Attendance was surprising. During the twenty weeks of the PEPPER experiment, two-thirds of the parents came repeatedly. Mothers came to school outside of regular times for clarification of game rules or for additional material. Mothers reported that younger brothers and sisters were playing games and learning the words.

7. Conclusions

Subjective observations indicated 1) a high interest in reading and in school in general from students whose parents were involved in PEPPER, 2) greater understanding of individual children by teachers and parents resulting from improved communication with parents, and 3) that parents reflected a deeper sense of their children's capacities and toleration of their limitations.

Durican and VonBehren conclude that PEPPER did indeed enhance the reading program in their school.

The Effects of a Parent Education Program on Reading Readiness and Achievement of Disadvantaged First Grade Negro Children

Frank W. Freshour
University of Florida, 1970

1. Purpose of the Study

Freshour reports that the study was carried out to determine whether a parent education program stressing parent-child interaction could improve the reading readiness and achievement of disadvantaged First Grade Negro children.

2. Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of twenty-eight disadvantaged children from two schools who were divided into an experimental and a control group, matched according to sex, teacher, and readiness scores on the Metropolitan Readiness Test, administered by the classroom teacher in September 1969.

3. Description of the Program and How Parents Participated

The parent education program consisted of a series of fifteen meetings, held one night a week at each of the two schools, from October, 1969 to March, 1970. The areas of readiness emphasized at these sessions were 1) language development, 2) visual perception, and

3) auditory discrimination. Parents participated in discussions on the topics, self-concept, individual differences, the classroom goals and activities of the teachers, and the value of a variety of experiences. The basic format of the lessons was a review of the parent-child activities of the past week, a new topic, and an assignment of parent-child activities for the coming week. Parents were also asked to spend a minimum of ten minutes a day with their children. They were also asked to take notes at the meetings and to keep a record of their activities with their children during the week.

4. Effects of the Parent Participation on the Reading Readiness of Their Children

Although there was an apparent raw score mean difference of 5.23 on the reading readiness posttest favoring the experimental group over the control group, this difference did not reach significance. The experimental group did not make a significant gain on readiness over the control group. The author concluded that since there was an apparent difference in growth in readiness in favor of the experimental group, that teachers might become involved in a parent education program and work directly with the parents and the children.

The Development and Implementation of a Tutorial Program
for Parents to Improve the Reading and Mathematics
Achievement of Their Children

John A. McKinney
Nova University

1. Purpose of the Study

To investigate 1) whether a training program designed to teach parents tutoring skills would help raise their children's academic achievement in reading and mathematics, and 2) whether the parents in the training group would evidence a more positive attitude toward the school.

2. Description of the Sample

The sample for this study included one hundred children, fifty randomly assigned to the experimental group and fifty randomly assigned to the control group, plus their parents. Those children whose parents were assigned to the experimental group became the experimental pupils' group while those children whose parents were assigned to the control group became the control pupils' group.

3. Description of the program

The program consisted of materials and procedures designed to carry out the following objectives in two hour weekly sessions with parents over fifteen weeks.

- 1) To develop a series of training modules which would teach parents to teach their children.

- 2) To train fifty selected parents, using training modules to become tutors of their children.
- 3) To develop a handbook for parents to use in tutoring their children.

4. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

Initially the investigator surveyed the parents of six hundred children from three schools in the Dade County School district of Florida, who were performing below grade level in reading and mathematics. The survey administered to parents of the target schools sought to determine the degree to which they felt competent to tutor their children. From a group of six hundred parents who indicated that they felt incompetent to tutor their children, one hundred were randomly assigned to experimental and control groups.

To help sustain participation during the program parents were asked for a firm commitment to attend every session and work with their children at home, using homework assignments provided by the classroom teachers. Further encouragement was provided by home visitations to observe the trainees working with their children and telephone conferences to determine the degree of success being achieved by the parents.

5. How Parents Participated - A Description of the Training Program

The first three weeks of the training program were devoted to helping parents get a mental set about the process of tutoring, providing an opportunity for the

parents to examine and utilize their natural abilities to teach and create materials, and to establish an atmosphere in which the parents could freely exchange thoughts about tutoring. The second phase of the training period was directed to "hands on" types of activities during the inservice training and tutor remediation phase. Development of skills in reading and mathematics were attempted through activity oriented sessions, including workshops, role playing and presentation of materials created by parents.

6. Effect of the Parent Participation Program on Children's Reading Achievement

Statistical analysis of the pre- and posttest results in reading indicated that the pupils who received the tutoring from parents scored higher than pupils who did not receive tutoring.

7. Effect of the Parent Participation Program on Parents' Attitudes

The results of an attitude survey, based on the parents' responses to the items on a questionnaire indicated that the training sessions were judged to be successful and that parents were more positive toward school after the program.

McKinney concluded that where parents are involved in their children's education, achievement will show a marked increase.

Parents Teach Kindergarten Reading at Home
Parent-Assisted Learning Program

Fred C. Niedermeyer, 1970

Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and
Development, Inglewood, California

1. Purpose of the Study

Niedermeyer reported on an experimental study to investigate the effect that parent-monitored practice at home had on pupil performance in reading, using as an instructional vehicle a kindergarten reading curriculum prepared by the Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Inglewood, California.

2. Description of the Subjects Involved in the Study

The subjects for this study were kindergarten children, selected from three schools, with three kindergarten classes in each school, all using the kindergarten reading program prepared by the Southwest Regional Laboratory. The Experimental Group was made up of seventy-four children and their parents, who participated in the Parent-Assisted Learning Program, from one school. From the other two schools Comparison Group 1 and Comparison Group 2 were selected to function as control groups, whose parents did not participate in the program.

3. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

Parents became involved as a result of the Parent-Assisted Learning Program, designed to enable school personnel to establish a system to help parents

effectively instruct their primary grade children in basic skills at home. Preparation to encourage parent involvement began when kindergarten children, who had been receiving classroom reading instruction since October, 1969, read to their parents at home from story-books brought home from school each week. Then in January, a district wide middle-income parent survey had shown that ninety-four percent of the parents felt that it was appropriate to teach reading in kindergarten and that eighty-one percent of the parents said they would take part in a home program, even if it required attendance at a meeting in the school.

4. Description of the Program

Programmed materials, called Practice Exercises had been developed to be used by parents of seventy-five children, of a total of eighty-nine, over a twelve week period starting in February. These practice exercises were designed to coincide with the ongoing classroom instruction by integrating the home instruction program with the teaching units conducted by the teachers, thereby giving the pupils classroom-related practice at home and providing remedial practice for children who needed it. The exercises provided practice on the four objectives of the kindergarten reading program - 1) to read on sight ninety one-syllable words, 2) to recognize and say eleven beginning consonant sounds, 3) to recognize and say twelve vowel-consonant ending sounds,

and 4) to blend previously learned beginning and ending sounds to sound out new words.

5. How Parents Participated in the Program, Both at School and at Home

Parents participated at home by making sure that the child completed the Practice Exercises, by giving verbal directions, and by reading the script printed on the exercise itself, while the child selected or constructed a response to a printed stimulus. Parents received instructions on how to proceed at home by attending a ninety-minute training session at the school. High attendance at this training session was insured by three devices. First, a parent could attend either a late afternoon session or an evening session. Second, free babysitting and movies were provided at the school during each session. Third, parents were asked to return a form to the principal signifying whether they would attend one of the training sessions. (The term "orientation session" was used with parents.)

Ninety-one parents, representing seventy-four of the kindergarten pupils, attended the training session. This session was directed entirely at what parents should do when working at home with their children. Parents were told how to use the Practice Exercises and how to respond appropriately to the children. Parents were also given short guidelines as to the length and frequency of home practice sessions. Parents also practised instructional

procedures in a structured role-playing situation in which they received immediate feedback on the adequacy of their behavior. Parents were told how to provide rewards for good performance by their children during the practice sessions. Record cards were provided to enable parents to record correct or incorrect responses during a session to obtain a concrete basis for managing the rewards.

6. Effect of the Program on Children's Reading Achievement

Initial reading achievement test scores and scores on a fifty-item posttest were available for the two comparison groups, as well as for the sixty-eight pupils whose parents participated in the Parent-Assisted Learning Program, the experimental group, and for fourteen children in the Parent-Assisted Learning School, whose parents did not participate in the program.

The posttest mean for the pupils who took part in the Parent-Assisted Learning Program was 83 percent, while the posttest mean for Comparison Group I was 55 percent, and for Comparison Group II, 50 percent. The posttest mean for the fourteen pupils whose parents did not participate in the program was only 60 percent. Furthermore, 66 percent of the pupils in the Experimental Group, who took part in the Parent-Assisted Learning Program, scored at or above 80 percent on the reading posttest, compared to 15 percent from Comparison Group I and 19 percent from Comparison Group II.

To clarify these achievement gains further, the author included the scores of all groups on the initial reading achievement tests, to show that the comparison groups were not necessarily low achievers. The mean score on the initial reading achievement test for the Experimental Group was 59 percent, for Comparison Group 1, 49 percent, for Comparison Group 2, 52 percent, and for the fourteen non-participating students in the experimental school, 54 percent.

7. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitude Toward Participation

Parents' attitudes during the Parent-Assisted Learning Program remained highly positive. Sixty-four of the seventy-four participating parents returned the questionnaire sent out one week after the program ended, to gain an estimate of how much parent-monitored instruction went on in the homes and to determine parents' attitude toward such participation. According to the estimates of the parents, they completed, on the average, 44.52 of the forty-eight exercises involved (92 percent). Parents were asked to indicate how long they felt they could maintain participation over an entire year. Ninety-seven percent of the parents who returned the questionnaire indicated a definite or probable willingness to participate in the program for an entire year.

8. Conclusion

According to Neidermeyer the study indicated that a carefully developed program of school-related home instruction can elicit high levels of parent participation and pupil learning. The features of the Parent-Assisted Learning Program that may have accounted for its success, according to its author were: instruction based on objectives, programmed materials, short but specific parent training, procedures for rewarding and motivating children, and a classroom program that generated positive parent attitudes.

Effects of a Summer Parent Workshop Upon the Performance of Preschool Children in Three Areas of School Readiness

Jane Yolanda Perez,
University of Connecticut, 1972

1. Purpose of the Study

Perez conducted this study to determine whether or not parents who were given appropriate instruction and materials could significantly influence their children's performance in (1) oral language concepts, (2) visual motor skills, and (3) body image. Specifically she tested the hypotheses that

- 1) there is no significant difference in performance between children whose parents attended preschool workshops and children whose parents did not attend preschool workshops.

- 2) there is no significant differences between children who utilized prepared activities designed to strengthen the three areas of readiness and children who did not.

2. Description of the Sample and Experimental Groups

The total population of the research study consisted of one hundred children randomly selected from 12 elementary schools in the city of New Britain and fifty parents. The experimental group consisted of fifty parents who attended a series of workshops and their children. The control group consisted of fifty children whose parents did not attend the workshop sessions.

3. Description of the Program and Parent Participation

The program consisted of six parent workshops conducted during the summer months of June, July, and August of 1971, on a semi-monthly basis. Each workshop session included a kit of materials that were introduced, demonstrated, and distributed to parents for use at home with their children. Parents also participated at each workshop by evaluating materials previously used with their children, listening to a twenty-minute presentation concerning the three areas of concentration (oral language concepts, visual motor skills, and body image) and going over a kit of materials to use at home with their children.

4. Effects of the Parent Participation and Use of Materials at Home on the Reading Achievement of Their Children

Statistical analysis of the data gathered in the study indicated that there was a significant difference in the performance between children whose parents attended

pre-school workshops and children whose parents did not attend the pre-school workshops, and that this difference was statistically identifiable to be at the .01 level of confidence. Additionally, the performance difference of the experimental group between the pre- and posttest situation was also statistically identified to be at the .01 level of confidence. With respect to the second hypothesis there was a significant difference between children in the experimental group who utilized prepared activities designed to strengthen the three areas of readiness and children in the control group who did not. However, Perez reports that while the findings indicated that performance growth in all three areas increased, only the performance between the experimental and the control group in oral language concepts was found to be statistically significant.

5. Effects of the Summer Parent Workshops on Parental Attitude Toward Participating and Supporting the Program

Perez reports that the descriptive data obtained concerning parent evaluation of kit material, as well as an overall evaluation of the parent workshops indicated that

1. Children responded to the majority of activities in a positive manner;
2. 97% of the parents reported increased understanding of school readiness and that their children demonstrated enthusiasm for learning activity;

3. 74% of the parents felt better prepared to help their children learn;
4. 87% of the parents stated that their children had shown definite improvement in the area or areas requiring attention;
5. 19% of the parents stated that their children had demonstrated definite gains in self-confidence; and
6. 44% of the parents mentioned improved parent-child communication as a result of the parent education programs.

English Haringey Reading Project

David Pettit

1. Purpose of the Project

To measure the impact of parent teacher collaboration to encourage parents to help their children with reading at home.

2. Description of the subjects and the procedure

The project involved Grades one to four children in six primary schools in the multiracial, working class London suburb of Haringey. Classes in two of the schools, whose parents collaborated with the teachers, served as the experimental group. The impact of this interaction between parents and teachers on the reading achievement of the children in these classes was measured against control classes within the two schools, two schools with no interaction, and two schools in which children were given extra reading tuition by a qualified teacher.

3. Description of the Project and How Parents Participated

The program consisted of reading practice carried out at home by parents three or more times a week, over a period of four years. Books and other related schoolwork were sent home regularly, and home visits were made two or three times a term to explain reading to parents.

4. Effect of the Program on Children's Reading

One of the major conclusions of the project was that children who received parental help were significantly better in reading attainment than comparable children

who did not. The research found that with home collaboration improvements in reading took place right across the ability range of children but particularly amongst poor readers and failing readers. In one home collaboration school the percentage of children reading below the average fell from 74 percent to 22 percent in two years and in the second school from 68 percent to 43 percent.

5. Effect of the Project on Parental Attitudes Toward Participation

The project concluded that in inner city multiracial schools it is feasible to involve nearly all parents in formal educational activities (about 95 percent). Most parents expressed great satisfaction in being involved in this way.

6. Effect of the Project on Teachers' Attitudes Toward Parent Participation

The projects' conclusion was that teachers involved in the home collaboration found the work with parents worthwhile and continued to involve parents with subsequent classes. Furthermore, once the project was underway teachers found the children better behaved, better motivated, and more satisfying to teach.

Finally, another significant conclusion of the project with respect to the two schools which had extra small group instruction from an experienced teacher, was that these groups showed no improvement and, in one case, after a year of extra teaching, was significantly worse.

According to Pettit, the projects' conclusions indicated that the reasons for this is that for some children in the infant and early junior school there is a mismatch between learning at school and activity at home. From the home visits circumstances could be seen which in no way could have been reached by a teacher who did not have this collaborative contact with parents. Extra teaching at school in the face of such problems could well attenuate rather than alleviate the symptoms of growing disinterest in learning to read.

Parents: Summer Reading Teachers

Howard J. Sullivan
Carol Labeaune

Southwest Regional Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, Inglewood, California

1. Purpose of the Study

To try out materials for a summer program that used parent-administered structured reading practice at home in an attempt to maintain children's reading skills during the summer months. This kind of program was considered necessary since, according to Sullivan and Labeaune, educators have often noted that children's achievement in academic subjects drop during the summer. The major purpose of the initial tryout was to identify procedures for use with the parents and the children.

2. Description of the Sample and the Procedure

The subjects of the study were the children who made up the total kindergarten population of three schools in two urban school districts of Southern California, and their parents. The children had participated in the First-Year Reading Program of the Southwest Regional Laboratory in kindergarten. A comparison group was obtained from two schools in a third urban district of Southern California, which was matched with the experimental group in previous reading experience, achievement scores, and use of the same reading program. The duration of the study was ten weeks.

3. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

In June, 1969, before the close of the school year, a letter was sent to the parents of two hundred and forty-four children who were just completing their kindergarten year. The letter briefly explained the Summer Reading Program and invited parent-child participation free of charge. Parents of one hundred and eighty three of the two hundred and forty-four children (seventy-five percent) accepted the invitation to participate in the summer tryout. Parents were encouraged to participate by completing weekly Record Sheets passed out for this reason.

4. How Parents Participated and What the Program Entailed

The Summer Reading Program of the Southwest Regional Laboratory was designed as a low-cost program that would eventually be purchased by parents, and would require no

monitoring by school personnel. The package contained a four page set of structured guidelines for the parents and ten weekly sets of materials for pupils. The guidelines explained the organization and the schedule for the program, and described the procedures that the parent was to employ in using the various materials with his child. Parents were required to spend ten to fifteen minutes per day, four days a week, using specified materials, which included a sheet of three exercises, (called Practice Exercises), designed to provide practice on the reading content covered by the children in kindergarten. Each weekly packet included a thirty-two page paperback storybook containing two illustrated stories, a Weekly Record Sheet consisting of short assessment exercises and an activity checklist to be marked by the parent, and an animal poster to be given to the child after he had completed all activities for the week. The Practice Exercises and the storybook provided practice on all objectives and content of the children's kindergarten programs except the word-attack objective of sounding out new words.

5. Effect of the Program on Maintaining Children's Previous Reading Achievement

Pretest and posttest scores were available for ninety-five regular participants, whose parents returned six to ten Weekly Record Sheets, and for thirty participants in the comparison group, as well as for thirty-two of the

irregular and non-participants whose parents accepted the offer to participate but returned zero to five Weekly Record Sheets. The mean score on a fifty-item test, for the ninety-five participants who took the pretest and the posttest, and whose parents returned six to ten completed Weekly Record Sheets, increased by 2.8 points (from 38.0 to 40.8) during the summer months, while the mean score of the comparison group decreased by 3.0 points (from 40.4 to 37.4). The mean pre-summer score of the irregular participants was only 28.0, and their mean posttest score of 27.2 represented a slight drop over the summer months.

Further analysis of the data, which involved grouping both the comparison group and a random sampling of the regular participants into three achievement groups, classified as high, middle, and low, for purposes of comparison revealed several trends. There was little change during the summer in the achievement of the high group among either the regular participants or the comparison subjects. However, the mean score of the regular participants in the middle group increased approximately two points from pretest to posttest, while the mean score of the middle group of children in the comparison group dropped five points. Similarly, the mean score of the low group of regular participants increased about four points while the mean score of the low group of comparison subjects dropped nearly four points. It seemed clear from these data that regular

participation in the program was of particular value to pupils whose achievement was average or low.

6. Effect of the Program on Parents' Participation and Attitudes

One of the purposes of the Weekly Record Sheet was to build in parent accountability to the Southwest Regional Laboratory for completing the program activities. The Weekly Record Sheet was to be mailed in to the laboratory each week. The authors considered that the number of Weekly Record Sheets received from the parent provided the most accurate indication of the extent to which the parent and his child actually did participate in the program. Of the one hundred and eighty-three children whose parents initially indicated a desire to participate in the tryouts, one hundred and twenty-seven returned six or more Weekly Record Sheets. The fact that parents of fifty-six children submitted five record sheets or fewer suggests that there was relatively little participation by many parents and their children.

An indication of parental attitudes to the program was sought through requiring parents to complete the Summer Reading Program Rating Sheet, which also provided an opportunity for parents' suggestions for improving the program. Parents' responses to the rating sheets revealed highly favorable attitudes toward the program and indicated that parents would like to participate in a similar program the next summer. These parental reactions were a positive aspect of the program.

Parents Are Teachers: A Beginning Reading Program

Carol Vukelich

College of Education, University of Delaware
In Conjunction with a Parent Education Project - Newark
School District

1. Purpose of the Study

To assist parents in their role as their children's first and most important reading teacher.

2. Description of the Program

The program, officially labelled the Preschool Readiness Outreach Program (PROP) was intended to share with parents of three to five year olds ideas on ways they could help their children develop beginning reading skills. It consisted of twenty-six weekly, three-hour workshop sessions, held in neighbouring elementary schools, and nine monthly pamphlets, suggesting ways to use readily available activities to stimulate and extend children's beginning reading and language skills.

3. How Parents Participated

Parents attended workshop sessions and constructed an educational game which could help their children develop a skill basic to beginning reading. The skill areas defined as basic included oral expression, visual perception, and auditory discrimination. Each workshop session began with the parents sharing their experiences with the previous week's game and their children's responses to the materials. The workshop leaders encouraged parents to suggest solutions to the various difficulties the children encountered.

During the second portion of the workshop, the leaders presented the current week's game, showing the parent how to construct the game and how to use it with their children by having all parents assume the role of the child. The latter part of each session involved parents in constructing games and taking part in informal discussions.

The monthly pamphlets concentrated on stimulating and extending children's beginning reading and language skills, through activities such as cooking, neighborhood field trips, getting dressed, doing the laundry, and preparing, eating, and cleaning up after dinner.

4. (a) Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitude Toward Participation in the Workshops

Only one half of the expected parents appeared at workshops. Parents' response to the workshop sessions was reported to be extremely enthusiastic, as indicated through the comments of the parents. The author felt that the informal discussions part of the workshop was as valuable as the assistance in game construction since it was during this time that parents asked and received answers to questions, such as, "My child cries whenever I leave him. How can I stop this?" These questions indicated that parents needed information on children's development and child-rearing ideas.

4. (b) Effect of the Monthly Pamphlets on Parents

The author reports that by the end of the school year, approximately three thousand children were receiving the pamphlets each month, with favorable response.

5. Effect of the Program on Children's Beginning Reading Skills

The author reports that improvements were noted in the children's beginning reading skills. All children were tested prior to the program with a series of pre-reading measures. Posttest data suggested that children whose parents participated actively in the program achieved significantly greater gains than those whose parents participated minimally.

Descriptive Summaries

Program Models Categorized as Group Guidance

Parents As Partners In A Program For Children With Oral Language And Reading Disabilities

Nathaniel A. Peters
Director of Reading and Language Clinic,
Oakland Schools, Pontiac, Michigan

William T. Stephenson Jr.,
Professional Management Specialist,
Oakland School, Pontiac, Michigan

1. Purpose of the Program

Recognizing the awesome role parents play in helping children grow emotionally and cognitively, Peters and Stephenson, teachers in the Oakland Schools' Reading and Language Clinic, designed a program which sought to involve parents of children with learning disabled children, specifically with language and/or reading problems. Their purpose for involving parents revolved around the need to increase parent awareness in several important areas. First, parents need to understand the sensitive and complex interaction between language-learning problems and a child's self-esteem. Second, and inextricable from the need to understand how a child's self-esteem is endangered by academic failure, is the need for parents to learn modes of child management that emphasizes positive patterns of interaction, sensitive listening, and social reinforcement. Third, parents can reinforce the cognitive and language skills introduced in the classroom and clinic by providing practice in the home and other parts of the natural environment.

2. Description of the Program

The Oakland Schools Reading and Language Clinic developed a two part program that incorporated understanding, skills, and reinforcement. The first part of the program was a 10 hour experience that sought to give parents a more positive and effective way to interact with their children. The ultimate objective was to foster the growth of a referred child's self-esteem. The second part of the program showed parents how to become more responsive communicators with their children in two 2-hour sessions that helped parents facilitate their child's oral language development.

The text used for the parent group was W.C. Beckers' Parents Are Teachers (1971). The book contains easily read dialogues, activities and case studies which allows parents, under the guidance of the group leader, to practice positive child management techniques. The three topics emphasized in the parent meetings were

- 1) The interaction of a language and/or reading problem and a child's self-esteem,
- 2) A social learning oriented child management program, and
- 3) The parent as a person capable of reinforcing and extending cognitive behaviors taught at school.

3. Further Description of the Program, Including How Parents Participated

PART I. This part of the program was a 10-hour experience dealing with the first two topics listed above,

entitled, "Learning Disability and Self-Esteem", and "Positive Methods of Child Management". The first topic emphasized helping parents to deal with the emotional difficulties that frequently accompany a language or reading problem and how to decrease children's anxiety and verbalized negative feelings about self and school. Using the work of S. Coopersmith, The Antecedents of Self-Esteem (1967), on parent-child interaction as it relates to the development of self-esteem in children, parents were encouraged to openly explore ways to alter the child's environment or their relationship to one another or to their child, in order to foster feelings of self-esteem in their child.

The second topic, "Positive Methods of Child Management" showed parents how to develop more positive approaches to managing their children. Parents were taught the varying types of reinforcement: social, activity, token, and unlearned. Emphasis was placed on noticing their children, praising their acceptable behavior and ignoring mildly unacceptable behaviors to avoid entangling themselves in a "criticism trap". To ensure that they practiced new child management procedures parents were given home activities that extended the skills they had acquired in the sessions. For example, following the first session parents were encouraged to become more sophisticated observers of their children's behavior. Parents were asked to observe the

referred child and to look for positive behaviors to praise or reinforce.

After the second session parents were asked to select a behavior they wished to either weaken or strengthen. This target behavior was then counted and a baseline for the behavior was obtained. Observation lasted for six days. Following determination of a baseline parents were encouraged to use praise and social reinforcement to strengthen positive behaviors while ignoring unacceptable behaviors. Much group discussion of social learning principles preceded parent experimentation. For example, a film "Who Did What To Whom?" produced by Becker (1974) was used for this purpose. It offers simulated practice situations taken from everyday social interactions. Parents viewed a brief vignette depicting social interaction between adults and children. They then discussed who reinforced what behavior in another person or who did what to whom. Although the major emphasis was on the use of social reinforcement parents were given a brief introduction to the use of token reinforcement, since it was sometimes used under the guidance of a school psychologist.

PART II. This part of the program dealt with the parent as a teacher of cognitive and language behaviors. In an attempt to better understand the complexities of improved and increased language involvement in day-to-day parent-child interactions, parents were requested to participate in a related program that emphasized the

important role they play in developing satisfactory language patterns in their children. In this part of the program, slides, audio cassettes, a film and a handbook were used in two 2-hour presentations. The handbook provided parents of preschoolers with general and specific information on assisting language growth through an encouraging household climate.

Parents were shown how to use the natural milieu and their own language as an appropriate model for their children. It was stressed that all language-learning areas are dependent on the adequate development of oral language. Audio tapes of the interaction between young infants and their parents were played in order to demonstrate the child's positive responses to warm friendly talk. Slides also illustrated to parents how everyday occurrences such as preparing meals, dressing, bathing, and play can be used as language-teaching situations. Parents were also shown how to strengthen language growth through the use of self talk and parallel talk. Self talk occurs when the parents talk out loud about what they are doing, hearing, or feeling at a particular moment. Parallel talk occurs when the parent describes what the child is doing, seeing, hearing, or feeling at a given point in time. This part of the program showed parents how the development of language skills can and should come about through appropriate use of positive interaction between parent and child in the natural setting of the home.

4. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitudes Toward Participating

The program developers reported that parents frequently reported seeing previously unrecognized positive behaviors in their children, that they felt more confident in interacting with their child's teacher and were less reluctant to share their concerns, and that parents who had successfully completed the program and who had significantly improved their interaction with their children as a result of ideas presented in the meetings participated in the program as parent "peers". These parent "peers" were usually eager to participate in those group meetings and contributed immensely to eliminating the barrier between parent and professional.

5. Effect of the Program on Children's Learning

According to the authors the Reading and Language Clinic staff found that the degree of parental involvement in these two programs was significantly related to the improvement a child made both in the clinic and in his or her classroom.

Descriptive Summaries

Program Models Categorized As Information About Reading

Children's Literature at Home Base

— Irving Baker, 1975
Associate Professor at the University of Connecticut, Storrs

Fran Durdeck
Singer Learning Center, Manchester, Connecticut

Elizabeth H. Rowell
Assistant Professor at Rhode Island College, Providence

Mimi Schmitt
High School English Teacher in New Haven, Connecticut

1. Purpose of the Study

To acquaint or reacquaint parents with the delights of children's books, adding some special personal ideas to help parents get their children involved in reading. More specifically the authors planned a non-credit course for parents. The rationale for the course centered on correcting a situation in which parents, the population that has the most influence on children, have generally been neglected with respect to being provided with knowledge of children's books. In the past, children's literature courses have been primarily aimed at reaching elementary education majors and teachers of English literature enthusiasts. Since research has shown, according to these authors, that the family life exerts a lasting influence on children and that parental example is extremely influential, they felt that a course in children's literature could help parents see their proper

role as surrogate teachers and show them how they could best supplement the work of the school, instead of pushing skills, as concerned parents so often do. They wanted to encourage parents to do things with their children which would cultivate exposure to books and a variety of reading experiences. The course, they felt, could prepare parents by acquainting them with a variety of materials and the many avenues of enjoyment of reading currently available. The ultimate goal was to provide the child with pleasurable contact with books and magazines in the home to help him have a lasting love and respect for reading.

2. Description of the Subjects Involved in the Program

The participants were parents of the children in one elementary school in Storrs where the course sessions were held. Indirectly, through their parents, the target population was the children of these parents.

3. Description of the Children's Literature Course

This program was piloted by the University of Connecticut and it consisted of eight weekly two-hour sessions. The course emphasized these features:

- 1) getting to know children's authors, illustrators and publishers;
- 2) finding ways to acquire books inexpensively;
- 3) devising methods to get children more involved in reading; and
- 4) deciding what materials are appropriate and work best.

Topics discussed included the following: Caldecott and Newbury winners, picture books, children's magazines, poetry, books on records, adolescent literature, fantasy and science fiction, book clubs, easy to use readability formulas, how to tie television in with books, getting kids turned on to reading, censorship, adolescent books, use of the public library, and how reading is taught in schools.

Methods used to inform parents on these topics included the use of a variety of audiovisual aids, including a movie; children's books on tapes and records; a telelecture hook-up with a book club representative; slides of Caldecott and Newbury winners; and transparencies illustrating various reading programs. Other resources included a panel of librarians, discussing services offered to parents and children; an enthusiastic and colorful workshop on book-binding and illustrating; a supply of books borrowed from the state library that parents could check out each night to share with their children; and a representative from the university book store present each night with a variety of paperback children's books that parents could purchase.

An integral part of the course was the midpoint break each evening when parents and instructors mingled and shared ideas and questions over coffee.

4. How Parents Participated in the Program

Parents were required to enroll in the course and were asked to bring a different guest each night. At some of

the eight sessions the number of visitors was twice the number enrolled. Besides participating in the course sessions, parents were encouraged to view a display of books and a project table during the break. The project table included activities for parents and children. Parents were encouraged to take home activities and books and to read themselves. The authors stressed that if children see that their parents enjoy reading and feel that reading is important, they will tend to do the same. Parents were consequently encouraged to read in many different ways, both to themselves and to their children.

5. Effect of the course on Parents' Attitude Toward Helping Children Read

Indications of the success of the course was gauged from the high attendance at each of the eight two-hour sessions, and parents' comments to the effect that children were benefitting immediately from the course. Parents were taking home books and reporting to the instructors on how these books were being positively received by children.

The authors hoped that the results of the pilot course would encourage other communities and schools to set up similar children's literature courses aimed at parents.

Survival Reading for Parents and Kids: A Parent Education Program

Jack Cassidy

Reading Supervisor and Coordinator of Gifted Education for
the Newark (Delaware)

Carol Vukelich

College of Education, University of Delaware

1. Purpose of the Program

To involve parents in reinforcing basic survival reading skills in their youngsters.

2. Description of the Program

The program was developed by the Newark School District and consisted of a series of five workshops for parents with children in the primary grades, each workshop lasting for two and a half hours.

3. How Parents Participated

Parents were involved in constructing games that focussed upon words and materials found in the child's everyday world. At the beginning of each workshop the leaders presented prototypes of three different games to the parents and explained how the games were constructed and played. The remainder of the workshop time was spent in making games. An example of one such game concentrated on the ability to read traffic signs.

4. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitude Toward Helping Their Children With Reading

According to the authors, parents could easily see the value of the activities they were constructing. At the same time they were not threatened by any lack of knowledge

about the reading process. The workshops facilitated an informal exchange between parents and between parents and the workshop leaders. Parents reported that their children enjoyed the games and other activities. The authors point out difficulties in attracting parents, however, especially the parents of those children most in need of reinforcement. Some parents appeared at all workshops, regardless of weather, ill children, or other responsibilities. It was found too, that more children were being reached than the number of parents in attendance reflected. At one workshop, eight parents attended, but forty children used the games.

Parents Attend Reading Clinic, Too

Helen Feaga Esworthy
Reading Specialist
Middletown Elementary School, Middletown, Maryland
Parent Coordinator
Hood College Summer Reading Clinic

1. Purpose of the Program

A summer reading clinic sponsored workshops to involve parents in their children's reading instruction. The summer parent group was started because it was felt that the parents should know what their children would experience in the clinic and how they could help their children when the clinic ended.

2. Description of the Program and How Parents Participated

The program involved two-hour workshops every Wednesday morning of the six week summer clinic. The

objectives of the program were 1) to orient the parents to the purposes of the Summer Reading Clinic, 2) to further the parents knowledge about reading by offering workable ideas at home, 3) to teach parents about instructional devices by having them make some for the clinic program.

The first workshop session concentrated on the first objective, familiarizing parents with the summer clinic teachers, the clinic area, and the objectives of the clinic program, the primary foci being self-concept and development of specific reading strategies.

The second to the fifth workshop sessions concentrated on meeting the second objective by selecting a particular discussion topic for each week's parent meeting. Topics included self-concept, readiness and pre-reading, sight vocabulary, word attack, questioning and comprehension, and functional reading.

In the concluding workshop, a discussion of the six week program was followed by a chance for parents to complete a written evaluation.

The third objective concentrated on making instructional devices for children. Many parents came to the clinic on days when there was no scheduled workshop. They made games that the clinicians used with the children, cutting out letters for bulletin boards, searching for pictures in magazines, and driving small groups on a field trip. Following the research finding that parents who learn

instructional skill development will likely remember it and share this knowledge with other parents (Cooke and Appoloni, 1975) the coordinators encouraged parents to become involved in making children's activities by having them 1) compile lists of materials found in their homes for use in reading activities, 2) compose questions after reading a story, and 3) use newspapers to find words for functional reading.

3. Effect of the Program on Parents

Program coordinators assumed from the positive comments of parents that the program was a success. The parents comments showed that they felt the workshops were well worth the time spent. Parents felt they had greatly contributed to the learning of their children and felt particular satisfaction when their children reported playing games which the parents helped to make.

Wanted: Parents Involved in Remedial Reading Programs

Martha Fager

Leonard Williams

Remedial Reading Teachers, Hillsboro Elementary School

1. Purpose of the Program

To achieve more parental involvement in their Title I remedial reading program for fifth and sixth grade pupils.

2. How Parents Were Encouraged to participate

Parent involvement was discussed with the Parent Advisory Committee (Title I Programs) and it was decided to hold a night meeting to explain all aspects of the remedial reading program to the parents of children involved in the project. To stimulate attendance a program of choral readings by the remedial reading students was included as entertainment.

3. Description of the Program for the One Night Meeting that Parents Attended

The teachers developed a Reading Handbook for Parents, since many parents had previously asked what could be done in the home to help children with reading. The purpose was to present the basic materials introduced in most reading programs, since many parents did not understand the terminology or methods of presentation. In addition to the handbook, other handouts were made available explaining physical and emotional development of fifth and sixth grade children. Various suggestions encouraging a child's interest in reading were gathered in another handout. Other materials explained the skills necessary for the reading process.

At the meeting the teachers explained just what the remedial reading program involved, how the students were selected, what diagnostic procedures were used, and what methods of instruction were used. A demonstration of some audiovisual teaching aids was included.

4. Effect of the One-Night Meeting on Parents

The parents responded enthusiastically. Parental interest in further activity resulted in the planning of a series of parent workshops for those interested in learning more of the techniques of reading instruction. The authors concluded that both the success of the meeting and the interest in the workshops indicated positively that parental involvement is not only possible, but profitable.

Stimulating Parent Involvement In Remedial Reading Programs:
Strategies and Techniques

Carol Sue Greenfield
University of Wisconsin, Parkside
(in bibliography)

1. Purpose of the Program

Greenfield describes a Title I compensatory program for the disadvantaged in Racine, Wisconsin, designed to involve parents in the reading process, both in the home and at school. The program involved remedial reading from kindergarten to Grade Six from three schools in Racine, along with their parents. It emphasized making

the parents more aware of how reading is taught, since it was believed that parents can help their children to succeed in reading when they know this information.

2. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

In attempting to lure parents to the school and observe their children in the remedial reading center, they were sent home "Happy Grams", on a weekly basis, which had a smiling face on top and briefly stated what and how their child was doing in reading. Parents were always invited to come and observe their children. These invitations were followed by three open-house sessions, designed to familiarize the parents with specific instructional techniques and materials used with their children and an awareness of tasks their children must accomplish.

3. How Parents Participated

At the first open house session parents came to the remedial reading center and examined materials used in the remedial reading program. Each parent was given a list of the activities and materials their child had been working with in the center and the opportunity to observe a demonstration of their use by a staff member.

In the second open-house session parents worked with their children in the center under staff guidance. A needed skill or activity lesson was prepared by the teacher and developed with the child, parent, and teacher present.

In the third open house session parents participated in a workshop, designed to provide them with games and

materials to supplement and reinforce the reading center activities. Parents made games themselves using materials provided. The workshop also developed into a sharing of ideas and problems related to reading among the parents while they were engrossed in making materials.

For parents who were reluctant to participate in the school visits or workshops, a home visitation program, consisting of one visit per month by an instructional aide or a resource teacher, provided them with staff prepared handbooks of homemade games and activities to encourage them to become involved. These handbooks were prepared for the kindergarten level and for grade one through to grade six.

For the Kindergarten level, the Title I staff wrote a book entitled Fun Things for Little Fans (1976) divided into four activity sessions. They were Auditory, Verbal, Motor, and Visual, with brief explanations of each term and activities. The activities could use easy to make materials found at home.

For grades one through to grade six the teachers of Racine School District prepared a handbook. How To Help Your Child Grow in Reading (1975) for parents. It emphasized providing parents with games and activities in the areas of Visual Discrimination, Auditory Discrimination, Sight Vocabulary, Word Attack Skills, Meaning Vocabulary, Library and Study Skills and Comprehension. Each section had a brief explanation and fifteen activities. The

handbook also included twenty-six ways to foster reading development, each keyed to one specific word -- Read, Talk, Listen, Discuss, Question, Accept, Provide, Visit, Give, Praise, Build, Help, Secure, Make, Select, Encourage, Teach, Show, Look, Convey, Share, Rest, Assist, Memory, Observation, and Remember.

A home contact log provided a brief description for the parent relating to a specific reading activity, which was demonstrated by the instructional aide, who provided parents' comments on returning.

4. Effect of the Program on Parents

No information was provided with respect to parental receptiveness or response to the "at school" part of the program. For the "at home" part of the program, Greenfield relates that many parents reported that the handbooks were very helpful in providing them with concrete ideas on how to bring reading home.

Parents and the School

Alma Harrington, Instructor
State University of New York at Buffalo, 1969

1. Purpose of the Study

Harrington describes a course for parents entitled "How to Help Your Child With Reading in the Home", designed to provide an in-depth study of one specific subject area, reading, with parents. The course was intended for parents

of the Hamburg Central School System, Hamburg, New York.

2. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

The original publicity describing a ten week course with a designated topic pertaining to reading for each session failed to generate a favorable response because it appeared that parents were hesitant about signing up for a course for a ten week period of time. Consequently, an attempt to attract parents was changed to an announcement that all adults who felt that they might be interested in attending a few class sessions related to reading were to meet on a specified night.

3. Description of the Course

As a result of discussion at this initial meeting centered upon what parents would like to know about reading, future class sessions were designated to discuss some of the parents' specific concerns and interests. The topics for the future meetings centered around five areas;

- 1) Reading -- what it involves and various approaches to it.
- 2) Preschool Preparatory Experiences.
- 3) Reading instruction in Grades One to Three.
- 4) Reading instruction in Grades Four to Six.
- 5) Library books and their use by children at home.

The material written and compiled for use in teaching and discussing these topics purported

- 1) to provide the parents with specific background information on the topic,

- 2) to provide helpful tips for working with skills pertaining to that topic,
- 3) to suggest activities related to the topic which could easily be used and implemented within the home situation, and
- 4) to refer, only casually, to published material which parents could buy in relation to that topic.

The concept of the role of the school, the role of the teacher and the role of the parents were discussed. Emphasis was placed upon the fact that each reading skill should be introduced first in the school situation by the teacher. Once the skill had been introduced by the teacher to the child, the parents' role involved providing practice at home to reinforce the school's efforts.

4. The Effect of this Program on Parents

Harrington reports that many parents did come to the class sessions with specific questions pertaining to how they could teach their child certain reading skills and they were encouraged to first discuss the question with the school's professional personnel, and second, if possible, to observe or sit in on the child's actual learning involvement. In addition, most parents found those sessions to be a place where their concerns for their child were diminished and their understanding of learning to read was increased. Furthermore, an evaluative questionnaire completed by parents voluntarily at the end of the class sessions resulted in positive written comments regarding their effectiveness with

parents. Parents were indeed "gratified" in finding out ways of helping their children at home. Some felt more confident in helping their children at home while others felt that contact with a concerned trained person who deals with children for their benefit was a rewarding experience.

Project PEP

David R. McWilliams,
Assistant Director of the Ohio University Teacher Corps Project,
Athens

Patricia M. Cunningham,
Director of Reading, Alamance County School

1. Purpose of the Project

The authors describe how the Ohio University College of Education's Teacher Corps Project in the Meigs Local District offered a Parent Education Program (PEP) to parents in the Meigs local community to teach parents how to help their school age children benefit from reading instruction in the schools, and how to provide a home environment that would help their preschoolers develop those readiness skills expected of a beginning reader.

2. Description of the Subjects Involved in the Project

The total number of preschoolers and school age children represented by forty-five parents who participated was one hundred and thirty.

3. Description of the Project

The project consisted of six weekly sessions of one and one-half hour each, conducted by twenty trained project interns. Three sessions were developed around the course content and techniques for the presentation of that content to parents. The other three sessions were developed around the area of reading which parents had expressed concern over.

Several factors worked together to encourage continued parental support. First, each session used a variety of instructional techniques geared toward active parent participation such as brainstorming, learning centers, make-one-take-one, and games. Second, the weekly sessions were short, about one and one-half hours. Third, outside resources, such as guest speakers, community librarians and county bookmobiles were brought into the program. Finally, the children's activities added an additional impetus and allowed for the participation of both parents.

4. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

Parents were encouraged to participate initially by the following provisions.

- 1) The program emphasis was not on developing parent reading skills but rather on providing them with ideas they might use to help their children.
- 2) Activities were provided for children between the ages of four and thirteen. Parents were then able to participate without having to secure the services of a babysitter.

- 3) The recruitment procedure was handled almost exclusively by members of the community, leading to a feeling of community ownership of the project.
- 4) Parent participation was further facilitated by offering sessions in four separate sites to overcome difficulties associated with local pride and competition.

5. Effect of the Project on Parent Attitudes

A course evaluation completed by parents indicated that a new attitude toward reading had begun to develop on the part of the parents involved. While the authors were unable to predict the long range effects of the Project PEP on the children affected by the program, they felt that the program accomplishments were evident in the number of preschoolers affected and that the positive attitude developed in parents would make it easier to initiate subsequent community programs through the use of this core group of forty-five parents available as aides and contact people.

Parents Should Know About Reading Skills

Frances Powell
Graduate Student
University of Wisconsin, 1970

1. Purpose of the Program

To reinforce to teachers and educators the fact of parents' lack of knowledge about reading and how it is taught, Powell describes a summer remedial reading program involving a group of teachers, reading consultants and parents.

2. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

The parents of eleven second and third graders, the majority of whom were from upper class homes, who were enrolled in the summer remedial reading program needed little encouragement to participate since their concern with their child's progress in reading was evident from their cooperation and interest in the program. Furthermore, it was learned that these parents had already conferred with the children's various teachers to help the children overcome their reading problems.

3. Description of the Program and Parent Participation

In the summer program children attended four mornings a week, while Fridays were set aside for parents. Parents participated in both group sessions and individual parent-teacher conferences (at the request of the parents). During one group session, parents viewed a film explaining simple readiness skills and ways parents can help their children to develop them. The skills demonstrated were motor coordination, verbal ability, auditory comprehension, auditory discrimination, and visual perception. In the second part of the session the reading consultant explained to the parents the various methods used in an eclectic approach to teaching reading in the primary grades.

4. Effect of the Program on Parents

Although teachers and the reading consultant were dubious about showing a film of such elementary concepts to these parents the parental response to questions about

its benefit were unanimous. The parents found the film of definite benefit for them and they felt that it would be beneficial for other parents. They informed the teachers that they had not been aware of even these simple reading readiness concepts that were indicative of a child's readiness for school work and reading. They further indicated that if they had seen the film or otherwise been made aware of the readiness skills when their children were younger they would have been more alert to the children's level of development and could have easily helped their children in attaining the readiness skills.

Likewise, at the end of the second session dealing with various methods used in the teaching of reading parents readily volunteered comment on the fact that even though they had participated in the usual parent-teacher conferences and had in many cases talked with teachers regarding their children's reading problems they did not know how reading was taught. According to Powell, parents said they were glad to know about specific ways of teaching reading and many were relieved to know that more than one method was used, not just "phonics". Powell reports that the feeling was unanimous among the parents that the session about the various methods of teaching reading had been a most worthwhile one.

Finally, Powell felt that the parents' understanding seemed to increase their interest and cooperation in the

reading program and in their children's learning to read, to the extent that every Friday resulted in well-attended group sessions as well as individual parent-teacher conferences during which parents learned more about the developmental reading program.

Descriptive Summaries

Program Models Categorized as Parents Teach Own Children

Parental Involvement in Children's Reading

Norman Coulson

Principle Educational Psychologist and Senior Advisor for
Special Education, Cambridgeshire County Council

Robert Howells

Advisory Remedial Teacher,
Mid-Glamorgan School Psychological Service

1. Purpose of the Project

To actively involve parents in creating or maintaining children's interest in books for children who are having difficulty with reading, that is, for those who are making only slow progress in learning to read.

2. Description of the subjects

The project involved twenty-four children, six from each of four infant schools, in their final year, and who were having difficulty with reading.

3. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

Head teachers in each infant school selected six children in their final year who were poor readers. They then contacted the parents of those children and invited them to the school to discuss the aims of the project.

4. Description of the Program and How Parents Participated

Using forty books of a wide variety, parents were shown how to guide children into becoming interested in books and reading. This was attempted through discussion and demonstration of three points, in five one-hour

sessions, over an eight week period. These three points were:

- 1) How to read to children.
- 2) Getting children to point out words.
- 3) Asking the child to copy out words.

The books used covered a wide range of topics and types of stories. All were thin, in that they (or one of the stories from the book) could be read in about five minutes or less. Several books had only pictures and no words and many had a few words. A question card was prepared for each book. These were post cards with up to half a dozen simple questions related to the book typed on them, some including the page number appropriate to the questions alongside.

During the first session with the parents basic ideas and aims were discussed. Besides emphasizing the aims of creating or maintaining children's interest in books and that parents would be able to help by reading to the children, the idea of a continuum was discussed to help parents understand that there was no sudden change from being unable to read to being able to read. Because of this, the necessity to continue reading to a child long after school has started was discussed to prevent any sudden switch to exerting pressure on the child to read to the parent.

In this session also the various types of books were discussed with reference to those in the selection. Ideas

on how to "read" picture books and books about numbers were presented as well as ideas on reading short stories. Parents were advised to read the book before reading it to children. In requiring the parents to ask children the question prepared on the cards emphasis was on simplicity of question to prevent the children from answering incorrectly. The first session ended with parents being invited to take three or four books home to read to their children with a reminder to keep their story reading sessions relatively brief, around five minutes.

The pattern followed in the following week's session was to allow parents to discuss their findings, difficulties, successes and criticisms. A brief review of previous suggestions was made and a new point introduced. This and succeeding sessions dealt with the aims of getting children to point out words and to copy out words. After the fifth session parents were told that no more sessions would be held for one month but that they could still come along to the school each week to change the books. After a month on their own a further meeting was called to discuss findings.

4. Effect of the Project on Children's Reading Achievement and Attitude Toward School

Head teachers and class teachers reported marked changes in the attitudes of many of the children concerned in the project. Increased rate of work in class, increased attentiveness, and significant improvement in reading were

some of the main points noted. No teacher reported adverse effects.

5. Effect of the Project on Parents' Attitudes

Although there was some initial anxiety among parents because of their uncertainty regarding the reason behind the invitation to participate, this was quickly overcome. In virtually all cases the parents were aware of their children's difficulties with reading and most stated that they were already trying to help. They were pleased to be able to discuss reading in schools and were glad of the opportunity to take home several books per week from the school.

At first some parents found it hard to accept that they should read to their children rather than vice versa. Some did not immediately see the advantage of reading the book themselves before reading it to the child. Most were pleasantly surprised at the eagerness shown by their children both to have the books read to them and to answer questions. Most parents needed support to overcome minor problems. As they gained confidence and began to get increasingly enthusiastic participation from their children most parents became more relaxed. They were surprised at the range of books accepted by the children and that many books which appeared simple were enjoyed. The authors felt that there was no doubt that both child and parent gained some benefit from organized parental involvement.

The average number of books borrowed from the school by each parent over a period of eight weeks was twenty-one. Most of the parents expressed a wish to continue such a system. Many began to make fuller use of local libraries.

64. Effect of the Program on Teacher Attitude

None of the teachers felt that the parents were interfering in any way with the work of the school. On the contrary, what parents were doing, reading to their children, was wholeheartedly supported. All of the head teachers concerned were in favour of further similar groups being set up and expressed this view when the project was discussed at a meeting of head teachers.

Who Learns When Parents Teach Children?

Joan Raim

City College, City University of New York, 1980

1. Purpose of the Program

The low reading scores of pupils in the primary grades of an inner city elementary school (New York City) prompted the formation of a reading club, (Parents' Assistance Program), jointly sponsored by the school and its neighbour, The City College of New York.

2. Description of the Subjects Involved in the Reading Club

Parents and children were recruited for the club from the two lowest functioning classes in grades two and three. The third graders had Stanford Achievement Test scores

from the previous Spring averaging approximately one year's reading retardation, while the second graders were known to be performing below grade expectation, since no record of test scores was available. Initial screening tests indicated that most children still needed practice with word analysis skills, were unsure of sight words, and had limited strategies for word recognition.

3. How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

Teachers in the four classes distributed invitations describing the program and offering baby-sitting services for younger siblings.

4. Description of the Reading Club

The content of the weekly reading club sessions was based on analysis of the children's individual reading needs as well as the goals of the reading program. The weekly club meetings continued throughout the year and focussed upon a specific reading skill. The schedule included sessions devoted to sight word practice, developing phonic generalizations, vocabulary enrichment, learning to follow directions, and general oral reading experiences.

5. How Parents Participated

During the first part of the meeting the author helped parents construct instructional reading games and rehearsed their use. In the second hour, the parents used these materials with their children under the supervision of the school reading teacher and the author. Since parents

tended to view formal reading activities as the real work, the games and toy construction had to be balanced with workbooks and drills.

6. Effect of the Program in Increasing Children's Reading Performance

Because attendance, averaging twenty parents for initial club meetings shrank to ten regulars, the base of evaluation was changed from statistical to descriptive. Year-end standardized reading scores were available, and inspection of these indicated that each child held his/her own and half of the children were closer to grade level than when the program started. Repeating the initial screening tests suggested that specific skills had improved with all children. Their teachers also reported positive shifts in motivation for classroom reading.

7. Effect of the Program on Parents' Attitudes Toward Helping Children Read

Responses to questionnaires filled out by the parents indicated that several parents had learned new ways to help their children, had observed improved changes in their own reading, and were now capable of helping children with their homework. The reading club parents, unlike more educated and sophisticated parents, were assuming a new role for the first time, that of teaching their children school-related skills. The feelings of accomplishment which accompanied the teaching, according to the author, led to the parents' report of their own skill improvement.

8. Conclusion

Raim concluded that the program demonstrated that the urban parents, who often have a minimal education, can learn to be effective and to feel effective.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This chapter contains an analysis of the research activity under review in this study in the area of parent participation in reading. The analysis consists simply of examining the information contained in the program model summaries for the purpose of determining the presence of trends and consistencies with respect to the following:

- 1) the goals of parental involvement in reading,
- 2) the nature of parental involvement in reading,
- 3) the effect of parental involvement in reading on children's reading achievement,
- 4) parents' and teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of parental involvement in reading, and
- 5) design characteristics and implementation.

Much of this information is summarized more concisely in tabular form. The construction of these tables was subject to limitations resulting from the omission of certain essential information in the authors' descriptions of the studies. Blank spaces on the tables may not necessarily reflect inaction in a particular area. It may simply mean that the author failed to include the information in the description of the study. Consequently, in some instances the tables represent a certain degree of organization and interpretation by this reporter.

Program Goals

An analysis of research in the area of parental involvement in reading reveals several weaknesses in terms of its goals. First, investigators have been preoccupied with measuring to determine the extent of improvement effected in reading development, primarily in the area of reading skills. Table 1 shows that only three studies deviated from this specific aim. These three studies involved parents in their children's reading for the purpose of creating an interest in books. Second, in terms of the programs' effect on the people involved, this information was sought for just one group, parents. Additionally, although a large percentage of investigators sought to evaluate parental response to being involved, measuring this particular response was made an integral part of the program goals in just one study. Teacher response to parent involvement in reading or teacher perceptions of parent effectiveness was ignored completely in terms of program goals. Although a few investigators included teachers' response in their program evaluation summary, this response was obtained through teachers' comments rather than through the use of standardized instruments.

Program Features

It appears that parental influence in helping to achieve the objective of increasing children's reading gains was sought on two levels. First, investigators most frequently

- 3 -

	EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES					
To Improve Reading Growth by Providing Various Types of Parental Counseling to Change -	1. Group Guidance					
Parent's Attitude Toward Child and his Reading	X	X	X	X	X	X
Children's Attitude Toward Reading	X	X	X	X	X	X
To Improve Children's Reading Achievement by Providing Parents With Information Regarding How To -						
Help Develop Reading Skills		X		X	X	X
Create Interest In Books			X	X	X	X
To Improve Children's Reading Achievement by Providing Parents with Materials to -						
Teach Child at Home					X	X
Teach Child at School						X
To Ascertain From Parents The Benefits Obtained From Participating.					X	
	Craig					
	Della-Bianc, Stahnen and Allen					
	Sagal and Hise					
	Stucholske					
	Suedmeier					
	Sundstrom					
	Theiberg					
	2. Information About Reading					
	Bruhlman					
	Gambrell and Jactrell					
	Grimmett and McCoy					
	MacLaren					
	Ryan					
	Smith, R.		X	X	X	
	Smick, W.B.					
	Stabler		X			
	Vators		X			
	3. Parents Teach Own Children					
	Breiling		X	X	X	
	Brolinski		X	X	X	
	Sucher		X	X	X	
	Clegg		X	X	X	
	Cranner		X	X	X	
	Duncan		X	X	X	
	Freshour		X	X	X	
	McKinney		X	X	X	
	Miedemeier		X	X	X	
	Perez		X	X	X	
	Pettic		X	X	X	
	Sullivan and Labaine		X	X	X	
	Vukelich		X	X	X	
	DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES					
	1. Group Guidance		X			
	Peters and Stephenson		X			
	2. Information About Reading					
	Baker		X			
	Cassidy and Vukelich		X			
	Ezworthy		X			
	Facer and Williams		X			
	Greenfield		X			
	Harrington		X			
	McWilliams and Cunningham		X			
	Powell		X			
	3. Parents Teach Own Children					
	Coulson and Howell		X	X	X	

involved parents close to the actual reading activity by providing them with information about reading that would better prepare them to help children learn to read (Table 3). At this level parents were informed about the reading process, how reading is taught in schools, how to stimulate children's language growth, and how to create an interest in children's books. Other investigators sought to involve parents more directly in their children's reading not only by providing them with information about reading but also by requiring parents to use teacher and parent prepared materials at home for the purpose of actually teaching children how to read, under teacher-monitored conditions.

The other level of parental involvement, more remote from the actual reading experience, compared with teaching children "how to read", addressed the treatment of factors that might be perceived as contributing causes of reading difficulties, in terms of their effects on "motivating" children to read. These factors, associated with the home environment, include parent-child relationships and various parental attitudes and feelings affecting the child's self concept or his self esteem. Specific treatment effects employed the use of psychological counselling, contingency management-consistency management techniques, and group guidance techniques in 1) improving parental attitudes toward themselves, their children's reading, and school, as well as their emotional and intellectual interaction with their children; 2) reducing parental feelings of isolation, shame,

anxiety, and personal tension; 3) applying principles of the teaching-learning process; and 4) effecting measures to promote a home environment conducive to learning.

The Nature and Extent of Parent Participation

Although it has been stated that parents are generally interested in their children's reading and would like to help, reasons have already been advanced to account for the absence of parent-initiated action with respect to finding out or demanding from educators how they might help. The motivating force originated either with university personnel interested in carrying out research from an empirical point of view, sometimes prompted by funding, or from service-oriented school or school district personnel, recognizing the limited potential of the school (Table 2). In a few studies parental involvement in planning the program was solicited (Smith, 1968), or parents were employed to publicize the program for recruitment purposes. Parental involvement in planning, however, never reached the level characteristic of some later Title I programs in which parents assumed a prominent organizational role.

Understandably, considering the origins of program initiation, neither did parental involvement proceed on the predetermined basis that the schools' goals were incorrect and needed changing. Instead, parents were required to accept the school model as being correct and to learn to implement it at home. Although several program components resulted from parental input concerning reading related topics they wanted discussed, most programs encouraged parent participation after the program had been planned.

Program Initiation and Funding

Initiated by		Funded by		Title	
University Teaching Personnel		Cooperative Research Program			
University Graduate Student		Southwest Regional Laboratory			
School Teaching Personnel		Oakland Interagency Project			
School District Personnel		Educational Research Institute of B.C.			
Department of Education Personnel					

EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES	
1. Group Guidance	
Craig	
Bella-Plane, Scharren and Allen	X
Recal and Pizer	X
Studholme	X
Suedmeier	X
Sundstrom	X
Thalberg	X
2. Information About Reading	
Brinsma	X
Cambrell and Jarrall	X
Grammet and McCoy	X
MacLaren	X
Evan	X
Smith, H. O.	X
Smith, M. B.	X
Stabler	X
Waters	X
3. Parents Teach Own Children	
Brelling	X
Brzinski	X
Buckner	X
Clegg	X
Cramer	X
Duncan	X
Frahour	X
McKinney	X
Niedermeier	X
Peter	X
Pettit	X
Sullivan and Labeanne	X
Vukelich	X
DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES	
1. Group Guidance	
Peters and Stephenson	X
2. Information About Reading	
Baker	X
Cassidy and Vukelich	X
Esworthy	X
Fager and Williams	X
Greenfield	X
Harrington	X
McWilliams and Cunningham	X
Powell	X
3. Parents Teach Own Children	
Coulson and Howell	X

Rather, parent involvement in the programs under review in this study assumed the form of attendance at meetings, workshops, and individual parent-teacher conferences; the acceptance of home visits by investigators or teaching related personnel; and the use of handbooks or study guides (Table 3) to learn 1) how to help their children with reading at home, 2) how to follow a prescribed program of materials to teach reading at home, or 3) how to improve the home environment with respect to eliminating conditions or circumstances inhibiting reading. Although parent participation in general was at the "recipient" level (Table 3) whereby parents were informed by the school about ways in which they could help children with reading, more specifically, their roles were dependent on the particular program feature, (Table 3) with some inevitable overlap. For example, parents used teacher or parent-made materials at home in both the "Information About Reading" and "Parents Teach Own Children" program features. The difference between both these program features was that in the former the materials were few and constituted examples of what parents could use at home while in the latter parents used a different set of materials every week and the amount of participation was generally evaluated. Similarly, providing a home environment conducive to learning how to read, while a particularly acute role for the "Group Guidance" parents, was also stressed for one or both of the other two groups of parents (Table 3).

Table 3

[illegible]

How Parents Were Encouraged to Participate

Aware of the reasons accounting for poor parental response to school initiated functions, people responsible for preliminary planning of parental involvement programs in children's reading considered various means of attracting parents to schools for meetings and workshops: Some program models employed such persuasive methods as gaining the interest of parents by having children read to parents from books sent home from school each week, followed by a survey asking parents if they would participate or if they felt competent to tutor children with reading. Other program organizers, showing a degree of foresight, concentrated on the problem of maintaining parent attendance for the duration of the program. These programs contained built-in techniques involving the presence of children as a motivating factor, such as requiring mother-child pairs, activities in which the mother was given assistance in working with her child under supervision, or including the presence of children at meetings for choral reading or for "reading parties". Other techniques included requiring parents to keep records of home activities and the use of child motivating techniques, such as providing monthly calendars on which children were required to place stickers on completion of home tasks, along with awards for continuous performance. These and other techniques encouraging parent attendance are included in a comprehensive list contained in Appendix A.

The Effect of Parental Involvement in Reading
on Children's Reading Achievement

Only the studies classified as experimental (Table 4) evaluated the effect of parental influence on children's reading. The evaluative criteria for measuring parent effectiveness in this area concentrated primarily on whether or not reading gains achieved significance in such skill development areas as sight vocabulary, word meaning, sentence meaning ability, paragraph reading ability, oral reading, silent reading and comprehension. Parental influence on children's reading interest or children's attitudes toward reading received little attention.

An analysis of the data, which involves comparing the reading gains with several design characteristics, reveals trends and relationships or associations that may be considered useful with respect to future activities involving parents in children's reading.

The first of these relates to the effectiveness of parental influence in children's reading by looking at the reading gains (Table 4). Twenty-seven of the twenty-nine experimental studies measured reading gains. Of these twenty-seven, twenty-six reported reading gains, twenty or 76% of which reached significance. Although some investigators individually cautioned against generalizing because of weaknesses in design characteristics, such as small samples, lack of control groups, or programs extending over a short period of time, taken collectively the greater number of

Table 4
Student Evaluation

[illegible]

studies showing significant gains in reading provide conclusive evidence as to the positive value of involving parents (Table 4).

Furthermore, this decisive relationship between parental involvement in reading and children's reading gains may be strengthened when one examines the studies that did not report significant reading gains. Closer scrutiny points to possible associations between the amount of parental involvement, in terms of the duration of the program, and reading gains significance, that may have negatively influenced their findings (Table 4). For example, of the seven studies failing to report significant reading gains, two did not report on the duration of the program, while in another (Stabler, 1969) the program involved parents in just three individual conferences of one hour each, plus one group session, for an approximate total of five hours. Similarly, although Smith's (1979) program extended over a period of eight weeks, the program involved parents in only three general meetings and two individual conferences of half-hour duration, for a total of approximately seven hours. Furthermore, out of a sample of thirty children, the number of children represented by parents at each of the three general meetings were twenty-three, twenty, and fourteen respectively. Additionally, two other studies, Suedmeyer (1971) and Buckner (1972) reported programs extending over six weeks duration, as compared to an average of approximately sixteen weeks. In one of these, (Buckner, 1972) the results

may have been negatively influenced by the fact that the program procedure involved no face-to-face communication with parents and no feedback from parents as to the amount of time actually spent on the reading activities at home. These possible associations may mean that the results of the studies reporting insignificant reading gains may be dubious. With respect to parental involvement in children's reading they also lend support to findings by other investigators in this survey, Sullivan and Labeanne (1969), Vukelich (1978), Brzeinski (1964), and Peters and Stephenson (1979) that the degree of parental involvement in children's reading is significantly related to reading improvement.

A second finding relates to a trend in the age group of children represented by their parents in involvement programs. Although children of all ages were represented by parent participation in reading most programs involved children of primary children (Table 3). Also, it is obvious from Table 4 that significant reading gains have been achieved by children of all age levels. In terms of identifying any particular group of children whose parental influence is least effective, however, the fact that most studies involved pre-school, primary or elementary children, with most at the preschool-primary level, reflects a consensus of professional opinion about the age level likely to benefit most from parental involvement. Furthermore, only one of the two studies at the junior high age level children (Studholme, 1964)

reported significant gains. However, closer analysis reveals that the sample involved just six students, whose reading levels were from two to five years below grade level and who were receiving remedial reading instruction.

A third finding suggests a relationship between program features and significant reading gains. Of the three program features identified earlier, seven of the twenty-six experimental studies reporting reading gains involved parents in the "Group Guidance" category. Of these, five reported significant reading gains. However, the number of parents involved in three of these was quite small, and in four of these, children were receiving remedial reading instruction (Table 4). Nine of the twenty-six studies involved parents in the "Information About Reading" category. Of these nine, six studies reported reading gains, with four of these six reaching significance. In the third category, however, twelve studies of the twenty-six reported reading gains, with ten reaching significance. This specific relationship would also appear to be more reliable because of the larger number of children involved, and because they were matched with control groups in eleven of the twelve studies (Table 4). Although exact numbers were not reported, the Brzeinski (1964) and Breeling (1976) studies both included large samples. Consequently, it appears that the program feature categorized as "Parents Teach Own Children" was the most effective of the three in terms of its influence on reading achievement gains.

A fourth relationship is that between children functioning at a low level in reading achievement and reading gain significance. First, it appears that most parent involvement projects involved parents of low achievers in reading -- twenty-nine of forty-projects, or approximately 73 percent. This trend again suggests a consensus of professional opinion as to the group of children likely to be influenced most when their parents are involved in their reading. With respect to parent effectiveness, twenty-two of the twenty-nine experimental studies involved parents of low achievers. Nineteen of those twenty-two reported reading gains, thirteen or 68 percent of which reached significance (Table 4). This relationship confirms Sullivan and Lebeanne's (1969) finding in a study involving high, middle, and low achievers in reading -- that the most gains were made by low achievers. Also, this measure of success achieved by low achievers in reading when their parents are involved suggests that parents of low achievers in reading may tend to offer less encouragement and reward for school achievement and participation in academic activities than parents of high achievers.

A fifth finding relates to low achievers enrolled in remedial reading programs. An obvious relationship exists between the program feature "Group Guidance" and parents of remedial readers (Table 4). Of the eight studies involving parents of remedial readers, five of them were in the "Group Guidance" category. Of these five, four studies reported

significant reading gains. This tendency for investigators to involve parents of remedial readers in group guidance indicates a concern about the significance of the home in contributing to the child's success or failure in reading. Since research has shown conclusively that children with negative self-concepts tend to have low levels of reading achievement, and that factors absent or present in the home environment influence the child's self concept, the relationship shown here with respect to the rate of success of group guidance techniques is very promising. It brings into question the efficacy of remedial reading programs as compared to programs involving parents, in terms of correcting the cause of the child's reading problem.

Finally, in terms of perceiving relationships between program design characteristics and significant reading gains, of particular interest are the programs implemented over the summer. Of the eight summer programs, five of them were among the twenty-nine experimental studies. Four of these five reported reading gains reaching significance. The most encouraging implication here is that not only do children's reading achievement level fail to drop over the summer; to the contrary, their reading achievement increased significantly. Consequently, children begin the new school year with higher reading levels than when they finished the previous year.

The Effect of Parental Involvement
in Reading on Children's
Attitudes Toward Reading

"Thus far," the effect of parental influence in children's reading has been assessed in terms of whether or not children significantly increased developmental reading skills. Although this reading instruction goal is absolutely necessary, its worth must be assessed in terms of much broader reading context. For example, it would serve little purpose for one to know "how to read" if one does not read at all. It appears that too much emphasis is placed on "how to read" and too little emphasis on "motivating" the child to read. The function of the school and the home should be one of nurturing children's interest in books, in order that their lives may be enriched by the insights and enjoyment often found only in books. The fact that investigators interested in involving parents in children's reading largely ignored this aspect of reading is conspicuous in its absence in the program models' goals. It also raises questions about the propriety of the tendency for schools to expect parents to accept their models as correct.

As noted above in the section I, Program Goals, only three studies, Baker (1975), Gambrell and Jarrell (1980), and Coulson and Howells (1975) concentrated on creating an interest in reading books. Of these three only Gambrell and Jarrell (1980) evaluated children's response, using an attitude scale designed for that purpose. In seeking the

response of 194 children to the Summer Book Program, twenty items were selected specifically reflecting attitudes toward 1) the Summer Book Program, 2) reading in school, 3) reading at home, and 4) reading in general. Rank ordering of the items formed meaningful categories which appeared to add validity to the attitude survey. On a five-point Likert scale, the highest rated item on the attitude survey was, "How do you feel when you find a book that you like?" ($M = 4.95$). This indicated a very positive attitude toward reading and books in general. The second through seventh highest rated items were the six items specifically related to the Summer Book Program. Three items which reflect attitudes toward reading in general were next, followed by attitudes toward reading in the home, and attitudes toward reading with others. The items which were the lowest in rank reflected poorer attitudes in general toward reading in school, reading at bedtime and reading out loud.

The results of the survey, in Gambrell and Jarrell's estimation, indicated that children were most enthusiastic about the books, the activities involved, and the teacher coming to their home. The data, according to them, suggested that all aspects of the Summer Book Program were received very positively by the children who participated.

Other investigators who reported on children's attitudes toward reading during and after the program relied on the subjective comments of parents involved. On the basis of information gained in this manner, eleven of the studies

reported positive changes in children's attitudes toward reading and six reported that children subsequently read more at home (Table 4).

Effect of Parental Involvement in Reading on
Children's Interest in Reading and on
Their Behavior in School

One other effect of parental involvement in children's reading, again, not considered in any program goals, but observed by investigators, was a positive change in children's interest and behavior in school. Like the previous finding, investigators making this observation relied on the subjective comments made by teachers. Of the thirty-five studies involving school age children seven reported an improvement in the attitude of children toward school (Table 4).

Parental Response to Their Own
Participation in Children's Reading

Most investigators agree that parents are genuinely interested in helping their children with reading. The degree and persistency of interest was inconsistent, however, as one notes the general parental response to the studies included in this survey. This was evident from the failure of many projects to attract the expected number of parents. Often the project had to begin with fewer than the desired number due to difficulty in attracting parents. Also, in several projects parental attendance was sporadic, despite built-in encouragement techniques. This trend is particularly

unfortunate since several investigators reported that regular parent participation in the program had the greatest beneficial effect on children's reading performance and that the amount of parent participation was related directly to the amount a child learned.

Parental response to being involved in children's reading, as noted in the Program Goals section, received little prominence in that only one investigator (Waters, 1967) included parental evaluation as one of its program goals (Table 5). Twenty-three of the forty studies evaluated parents' response. Of these, only five used a standardized parental attitude measuring instrument. The others relied on responses to a questionnaire, an interview, or parents' comments, while eight failed to report any information with respect to parental response to the program (Table 5). In some instances this reporter was able to interpret positive parental response from the information provided in the author's description of the study.

Generally parents who maintained good attendance responded enthusiastically to the programs. Of the forty projects, thirty-three reported a positive change in the parents' attitude toward participation, fourteen reported a positive change in parents' attitude toward the child, and twenty-one studies reported a positive change in parents' attitudes toward reading. In addition to these, other benefits accruing from parent involvement included improved parent-child relationships, reported by thirteen studies;

Table 5

	EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES					
Parents Evaluated By						
Attitude Scale						
Questionnaire						
Comments						
Interview						
Positive Attitude Change						
Toward Child						
Toward Reading						
Toward Participation						
Teachers' Involvement Attitude						
Toward Child						
Toward Parent Participation						
Improved Parent-Child Relationship						
Improved Parent-Teacher Relationship						
Parents Better Prepared To Teach Child						
	1. Group Guidance	Craig	Della-Piana, Statmen and Allen			
			Regal and Rizer	X		
			Stucholme	X	X	
			Siedmeyer	X	X	
			Sundstrom	X	X	
			Thalberg	X	X	
	2. Information About Reading		Bruinana	X		
			Gambrell and Jarrell	X	X	
			Grimmett and McCoy	X	X	
			MacLaren	X	X	
			Ryan	X	X	
			Smith, H.	X	X	
			Smith, M.B.	X	X	
			Stabler	X	X	
			Waters	X	X	
	1. Parents Teach Own Children					
			Brelling	X	X	
			Bresinski	X	X	
			Buckner	X	X	
			Clegg	X	X	
			Cramer	X	X	
			Duncan	X	X	
			Freshour	X	X	
			McKinney	X	X	
			Niedermayer	X	X	
			Perez	X	X	
			Pettit	X	X	
			Sullivan and Shearne	X	X	
			Vukelich	X	X	
	DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES					
	1. Group Guidance					
			Peters and Stephenson	X	X	
	2. Information About Reading					
			Baker	X	X	
			Cassidy and Vukelich	X	X	
			Esworthy	X	X	
			Fager and Williams	X	X	
			Gouldfield	X	X	
			Harrington	X	X	
			McWilliams and Cunningham	X	X	
			Powell	X	X	
	1. Parents Teach Own Children					
			Coulson and Howell	X	X	
			Zinn	X	X	

improved parent-teacher relationships, reported by thirteen studies; and a feeling on the part of parents that they were better prepared to teach their children, reported by twenty-two studies.

Teacher Response to Parental Participation in Children's Reading

Evaluating the effectiveness of parent participation in reading programs, as perceived by the teachers involved, was omitted completely from program goals (Table 1). Although many investigators nevertheless reported teachers' perceptions of the programs, these responses resulted entirely from teachers' subjective comments rather than from any standardized measuring technique.

On the basis of information obtained in this manner, nine of the forty studies reported a positive change in teachers' attitudes toward parent involvement, while seven reported improved teacher attitudes toward the child (Table 5). Additionally, teachers in five studies found that children's behavior in class had improved during the study.

The sole study that did report extensively with respect to teachers' perceptions of being involved with parents (Gambrell and Jarrell, 1982), observed and recorded teachers' response as a result of their working with the parent through home visits. In helping parents to foster children's interest in books, teachers in this study frequently commented that they had positively modified their expectations of many of the

children as a result of the program, such as observing that children exhibited higher potential in the security of the home. Similarly, teachers expressed better understanding of children as a consequence of visiting in the home environment.

CHAPTER V

THE NEWFOUNDLAND EDUCATIONAL SCENE AND
PARENT PARTICIPATION IN READINGEffect of Parental Attitude Toward Education
on Children's Motivation to Learn

Despite the provision of expensive school buildings, with more and better facilities, a greater number of more qualified teachers, more diversified curriculum, and more effective approaches, the reading achievement of children in Newfoundland remains still too low and the student dropout rate too high (36%), (Statistics Canada, 1980). A factor that may be considered as contributing to this problem, among others, is the attitude of parents toward school and education. Sometimes this attitude may be negative, sometimes apathetic, but too infrequently is it supportive of the school's efforts in children's education. Instead, many parents and the general public appear to rely on the regular school to provide the sum total of their children's learning experiences (Lamswood, 1982).

Studies have shown, however, that the school is only one source of the child's education. Another source which is considered to be even more important is the home. In the United States an intensive study conducted by Coleman (Brennan, 1977) concluded that the school's potential in influencing the child is minimal compared to the influence of the home. In Australia, Moore's study of a generation

of secondary students, "In Loci Parentis", concluded that despite all the expenditure of effort and resources, it is the parents who reject or accept school values. He found it to be a most curious paradox that the whole enterprise appears to stand or fall according to the support or opposition of parents (Pettit, 1981). Similarly, Bloom (1964) suggests that the differences in academic performance may be related to the value placed on school learning by parents and students and the reinforcement of school learning by the home. Finally, Smith (1963) found that the values and attitudes of parents are reflected in their children and that unless the parents communicate by their actions and behavior that school learning is important the child is less likely to be motivated. Whichever source is more important, the home or the school, is subsequent to the assumption that one is complementary to the other and that the child's education is too crucial to be left to the school alone. Parents need to cooperate with the school in all areas of school life.

Effect of the Community's Attitude Toward Education

In Newfoundland today the need to work toward cooperation between the home and the school is greater than ever before. This is so because in today's society, unlike that of the past, the combination of sources (home, school, church and community) that worked together in attempting to convey to children the importance of education may have all

but disappeared. The following account may be considered typical of how these four sources intertwined in an effort to achieve this common goal.

In the two decades following confederation, when there were approximately 230 small school boards in Newfoundland and when each small community had one school serving the children of one religious denomination, the school, home, church, and community were four sources that impacted on children's education in a manner that was considered successful in helping children to perceive the relevance of schooling. It was the school, however, that became the focal point around which the others, individually or collectively, converged. First, it was the home that interacted most directly with the school. In those communities the teacher and parents were often well acquainted with each other to the extent that the teacher became knowledgeable about the child's home environment. This information helped the teacher to more fully understand the child. Teachers became respected by parents and children alike, augmented through their additional function of conducting various necessary church services. The parents supported the school generally, in matters of discipline, but mainly in seeing that the child completed homework. In addition, they frequently listened to their children read from the reader. Children were also aware that their parents supported what the teacher did in school. Second, the church's influence supported and added to the work of the

home and the school. Since the children were usually of one religious denomination the school was frequently constructed near the church, which was respected partly because of its awesomeness. During the school day informal visits to the school by the clergy became a common practice. Additionally, the school functioned as a Sunday school and as a hall where the church affiliated women's group performed concerts or held other social events. Third, the school became identified with the whole community. It functioned as a meeting place for any issue of public importance, as well as for any event of an entertaining or social nature ranging from community concerts to visiting groups of entertainers.

Consequently this cooperation and intermingling around a central point, the school, appears to have positively influenced children's attitude toward education. First, parent-teacher and parent-school relationships were very personal. Parents referred to the school as "our" school and access to it was an accepted right. Second, with all four groups cooperating and working in unison, children's education may be described as being Christian, steeped in the moral, spiritual, academic, and social values reflected by each group. Third, the atmosphere generated by the four sources communicated to children the avenues open to those who completed school, as compared to "unattractive" alternatives awaiting those who did not. The belief held and expressed by adults to children everywhere, for example, was "You won't get anywhere without your education today!" Children and

parents were so enthused about education, for example, that when the results of public examinations were released the whole community knew within a few minutes who passed and who failed.

Effect of Educational Innovations

Newfoundland's entry into Confederation brought about changes that appear to have fatally affected the educational conscience generated by this combination of sources. The pattern is quite familiar to most Newfoundlanders. First came centralized high schools in Foxtrap and Corner Brook in 1954, viewed as advantageous in equalizing opportunities and providing facilities unknown in small schools. This centralization process, a new concept in education, when also applied to population eliminated not only small schools but also small communities as well. The elimination of small communities was considered a necessary movement of people to large centers partly to facilitate the erection of large schools to serve large populations of children (The Royal Commission on Education and Youth, 1967). The Royal Commission on Education and Youth, completed in 1967, hastened the demise of the kind of educational atmosphere present in the scene described above, with its recommendations regarding the amalgamation of small school boards into 35 larger school boards and the decrease of church and public influence in education. This process finally led to an educational scene in Newfoundland which consists of large high schools and

large elementary schools, not necessarily in the same community, serving children in the surrounding communities, to the extent that these children have to be bussed to a school as far as thirty miles away from the community in which they live.

The consequences of this "educational progress" in terms of parent-school-church-community relationships include these:

1. The educational system in Newfoundland consists of 35 large school boards, with educational authorities remote from many communities and parents.
2. Some communities are without schools.
3. Parents living in many communities are so remote from the school, which is in another community, that parent-teacher, parent-school relationships have been decreased significantly. The school is no longer considered "our" school, but "Johnny's" school. Parent access to the school owned by a remote authority is so conditioned and regulated that parent and community use of the building has been discouraging. No longer is the school the focal point of the community.
4. The distance between the community and the school in itself makes communication between parents and teachers difficult, because of transportation problems and impersonal through the use of the telephone.

5. Parents no longer know or are acquainted with teachers, and vice versa.
6. Teachers frequently live miles away from the school, sometimes in communities not served by the school at all.
7. Teachers frequently have no idea or no information about the child's home or community environment.
8. The school, in serving children of several protestant denominations, has resulted in barriers being created with respect to church or Christian influence in education. Church influence has now been relegated to developing religious education programs for schools, which sometimes have little relevance to the local church and which attract very little of children's interest. Local church influence in the lives of children has become insignificant because some parents disagree with the religion taught in schools and children are sometimes allowed to be exempted from religion altogether. This practice may sometimes result in a "snowball" effect. Additionally, the various religious groups cannot always cooperate with respect to scheduled school visits. Parents object to classroom visits by clergy of another religious affiliation to the extent that informal classroom visitation by clergy have practically ceased.

9. Finally, the overall effect is that education has become associated with "something from the outside".

It must be understood that this reporter is in total agreement with the educational innovations in Newfoundland's educational system. There is no dispute with respect to the necessity for improvement in terms of professional or managerial administration, both at the department level and at the school board level. Improved material and human resources, broader curriculums and improved educational achievement by children in many areas are some of the benefits. What this reporter observes with some degree of regret is the final result with respect to parental interest and responsibility in education. In the process of this educational transformation it appears that parent and church influence in children's education became excluded and substituted by "educators basing their claim to a share in educational administration on professional grounds" (Report on the Royal Commission on Education and Youth, 1967, p. 74). In the name of progress in education the elimination of administrative inequities, the inadequacies and inequalities of the old system resulted also in the elimination of its advantages. The community attitude toward education, in the atmosphere surrounding the school, which permeated the whole society and which attempted to communicate society's objectives of the school to its children, appears to have practically disappeared. No longer do these four sources, home, school, church and community work in unison toward conveying to children the

relevance of education. It appears, instead, that the opposite is true. In examining these sources of education carefully one finds that they often appear to be working at variance with one another and in isolation (Lamswood, 1982).

Role of Parents in Children's Education in the Future

If one accepts the reasoning that part of the solution to improved reading standards, higher educational achievement and higher student retention rates in Newfoundland lies in restoring children's motivation to learn from school experiences, then parents will have to be considered and accepted as instrumental in this process. Schools, by themselves, cannot be relied upon to perform this function effectively, nor can they be expected to motivate children whose negative or apathetic attitudes have been influenced by the attitudes and values of their parents.

Role of Educators, Church and Community To Be That of Cooperating To Influence Parent Participation

Although it would be naïve to expect restoration of the phenomenon of the past society, in which all four sources cooperated in attempting collectively to convey the message of motivation to children, these same sources may be persuaded to cooperate more fully than they do at present to help parents perform the function which is now incumbent upon them.

Parents may perform this function in two ways:

1. by becoming concerned about the learning experiences children receive and by carefully monitoring their progress and development (Lamswood, 1982), and
2. by communicating with teachers about how they can effectively function at home to support the work of the school in teaching children to read.

Attempts of Two of these Groups to Influence
Parent Participation Already Begun

Attempts of Educators to Influence
Parent Participation

It appears that the process of cooperating for the purpose of stimulating parental involvement in education of their children, at least in terms of the first of these, has already started. Specifically, in the past two years, activity has increased on the part of all concerned with respect to encouraging parents to become involved. Ironically it appears that the Department of Education, unlike its behavior in the past, has reversed its position and has placed itself in the forefront in this regard. Through the medium of the Advisory Committees to the Minister, recommended by the Royal Commission on Education and Youth, supposedly to represent the public's views in education, (although the public has little representation on these committees) the department has made some significant beginnings. For example, in March 1980, the Minister of Education appointed an advisory

committee to study the status of kindergarten in the province because of, according to the minister, expressed concern by educators, health and social service groups, and parents (St. John's Evening Telegram, November 1981). Although this committee included no members to represent parents, it was indicated that the committee met with parents "whenever possible" (St. John's Evening Telegram, November 1981). However, in relation to the topic under discussion, the recommendations of the committee included "support for the role of parents in their children's education" (St. John's Evening Telegram, November 1981). More concrete proposals were forthcoming with respect to this recommendation, however, in the objectives of another advisory committee appointed by the Minister of Education in June of 1981. Two objectives of this committee, the Advisory Committee on Early Childhood and Family Education, were:

1. to assess the need for programs in early childhood education and parent involvement in the province, and
2. to outline parent education programs and to suggest ways of involving parents in early childhood education (Department of Education Newsletter, September, 1981).

It is considered necessary to point out that parents were not represented by the members of these two committees.

This consciousness on the part of the Department of Education regarding the role of parents in education is not limited to the activity of the advisory committees appointed by the minister, but receives, as it would appear, some direction and encouragement from the Special Services.

Division of the Department. Dr. Michael Steer, Director of that division, in an article published in the Newfoundland Teachers Association Bulletin, outlined to teachers his perception of the direction in which education should be moving in the future. Entitled "What Research Tells Us About Parent Involvement", Steer urged teachers that "inviting parents to become partners in their children's education is one way of improving the quality of public education in our province" (NTA Bulletin, June 1981, p. 6). In recounting what research has shown with respect to the results of parent involvement in children's education, Steer pointed out that teachers, sometimes reluctant to work with parents, need to be aware of the positive effect of parent involvement. In summarizing he felt that if parental involvement, parental education and home visits account for greater sustained academic gains than do curriculum variations, the expansion of parent involvement programs in elementary and secondary schools may be a key factor in combatting diminishing support for public education in Newfoundland and Labrador.

On a lower level of the educational hierarchy, that is, the teacher level, the number of educators in prominent teaching positions who support and encourage the value of parent participation appears to be increasing. An indication of their interest and concern in this area was evident when a number of these professionals addressed a conference of parents and teachers at the third annual general meeting of the Provincial Parent-Teacher, Home and School Organizations

in November, 1981. The first of these, Kevin Breen, representing the Federation of School Boards in this province, invited parents and teachers to involve themselves in the major issues of equality of educational opportunity throughout the province and pupil retention in schools (St. John's Evening Telegram, November 17, 1981). Another speaker, Bill O'Driscoll, representing the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, told the convention that the Association encourages parents to speak openly on school affairs, and that it welcomed the upsurge in the formation of Parent-Teacher Associations around the province. He saw the fostering of good relations between home and school as one of the most important functions of the Provincial Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations and Home and School Associations (St. John's Evening Telegram, November 17, 1981). Similarly, Tom Lafosse, Principal of Cowan Heights Elementary School and a past president of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, in reviewing the problems faced by Parent-Teacher Associations in establishing their place in the educational system said that the most important thing they can do is to build bridges, not walls. He cautioned parents that at a time when fewer than fifty percent of the adult population in the country have children in school, public support for the needs of education may decline and the voice of parents will need to be heard to ensure that the quality of education available will not likewise decline.

On the West coast of Newfoundland, at the school level again, observations regarding the danger of parent and student disappointment inherent in relying solely on schools to provide an "all around" Christian education moved one educator to call on all four agencies, school, home, church and community to cooperate in helping to ensure the attainment of this goal. Foster Lamswood, vice-principal of Herdman Collegiate, Corner Brook, cautioned that education is not restricted to the schools, and urged the interaction of the school, home, church and community as a joint partnership in which all strive to provide a variety of teaching-learning opportunities (Newfoundland Churchman, June 1982). Lamswood included suggestions as to how each agency can contribute toward that goal.

Attempts of the Church to Influence Parent Participation

The church has already indicated its willingness to cooperate in the education of children in Newfoundland. It appears to be exerting its influence mainly by pointing out to parents their role in education. The Newfoundland Churchman, a publication of the Anglican Church in Newfoundland, for example, has become a forum for inspiring parents to become involved in education. It periodically publishes articles to provide guidance to parents on issues affecting the quality of children's education, such as the effect of television on children's values and attitudes

toward sports and alcohol use. More importantly, through its editorial staff it encouraged parents to become concerned about the equality of educational opportunities within the province. For example, the editorial of the April, 1982 issue provided reasons why parents should become involved in school board elections in the province. It stated that since parents, by law, have to entrust their children to the care of teachers and school administrators, it is imperative that parents have input into the decision-making process affecting buildings, curriculum and other factors which determine educational standards. Citing recent problems of school board financing and an educational system that shows little visible evidence of the Christian philosophy on which it is built as two areas that parents should be concerned about, it cautions parents that the latter example may represent changes in the philosophy of education which eventually will erode other Christian principles inherent in that educational system.

Evidence of Present Parent Participation

In surveying the educational scene for evidence that parents are becoming involved, one notes that this is indeed a certainty. One other obvious trend is a reversal of emphasis on the part of educators in that they are now asking for parent support. Whether this request stems from a recognition on their part that school, by themselves, cannot

deal effectively with the present educational problems such as low reading standards and low pupil retention rate or whether it is an attempt on their part to gain parent political support against government in the face of economic and financial stress may be recognized if the present trend of involvement continues. At this time this reporter feels —that although there may be evidence that educators are soliciting parent support for ulterior motives, for the most part their requests are genuine, and that parents themselves recognize the need for such involvement. A closer inspection of the extent of parental involvement may also reveal its authentic characteristics.

Involvement of Parents Through Parent-Teacher Associations

Involvement Guided by Educators

It appears that at the present time parents are seeking input in children's education through the medium of parent-teacher associations and home and school associations. According to O'Driscoll, executive secretary of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, there is an upsurge in the formation of these associations around the province (St. John's Evening Telegram, November 17, 1981). They received some impetus, guidance, and attention through representation by a Provincial Federation of Home and School, Parent-Teacher Association, formed three years ago. The Minister of Education indicated at the last annual general meeting of the provincial federation that she was impressed

by the calibre and dedication of the people the organization has attracted in three years since its formation.

It appears that the objectives of these parent-teacher/home and school associations may be broadening and their activity becoming more consistent than the sporadic periods of alarm expressed by them over local educational issues, as in the past. Also, they seek input involving other aspects of education in addition to the usual service-oriented support for the local schools, such as overall interest in improving education in the province as a whole, in terms of curriculum matters, education programs, and educational spending. For example, Dr. Herbert Rose, a psychologist at Memorial University and President of the provincial association, has publicly expressed the concern of that association after the release of the Provincial Government Standards Testing results which shows that children are not doing so well on the average in reading and language skills as their counterparts in the rest of the country. He sees these test results as a clear warning to parents to change any complacent attitudes they may have and get involved in their children's education (St. John's Evening Telegram, July 1, 1982).

Evidence that parents have become involved, albeit with some guidance from educators, is the action taken recently by the St. Anthony Home and School Association over the financial position of the Vinland School Board. During a meeting in which the board's near bankrupt financial

condition was explained to parents by the school board chairman and the board superintendent, the group decided to write the Minister of Education expressing its concern over the "increasingly obvious inequality of education which is emerging across the province" (Newfoundland Churchman, April 1982). The members of this association impressed upon the minister that their children are caught in the middle with grossly inadequate library facilities, no laboratory facilities, no music or drama or art programs and no space to house the new Grade XII class in 1983.

Involvement Initiated by Parents Themselves

It seems obvious, then, that the medium through which parents are becoming involved and through which they seek to voice their views on educational matters is the parent-teacher association or the home and school association. As stated earlier the movement also appears to be directed toward their interest in curriculum matters. While it may also be obvious from the previous two examples that parents look to educators for guidance, some local associations are equally able in assuming leadership, in formulating policies and in determining how to become influential, through respectable channels. One example is the S.D. Cook Parent-School Association of Corner Brook. Its president, Smallwood (1981) expressed his anger over what he perceived to be a department of education's "impervious to public input" attitude (p. 29), by implementing curriculum projects based upon the assumption that all

children are identical. Contemptuous toward a curriculum geared to "the average student, the average school, in the average district" (p. 29) and toward the introduction of Grade XII as the most ill conceived policy this province has even seen, Smallwood called on parents to take the initiative and as a large group to use their influence to bring about some demands, and to possibly get the Newfoundland Teachers' Associations and the local school boards to consider parents as equal in the decision-making process. Like the members of the St. Anthony group, Smallwood feels that the Department of Education should channel its money and effort into improving primary and elementary education by the provision of a more diversified curriculum to include physical education, art, French and music programs as well as programs that are more flexible in accommodating more than the average student.

Future Effect of Parent-Teacher Associations
on Parent Participation in Reading

Since parental attendance at these local parent teacher association meetings may appear to be a visible sign to children of parental interest in education, it may follow that the children themselves may perceive school learning to be important to parents. Consequently, parental values and attitudes toward education may most likely be reflected in the child, thereby motivating the child to improve his level of achievement in school. If this parental involvement

trend continues, then the home and school associations may indeed be functioning to restore the motivation of children toward school learning.

The logical extension of this phenomenon is that this home-school atmosphere may be the appropriate setting in which educators can encourage parents to become involved in a more direct way. In doing this, educators can help parents in the second of the two functions pointed to earlier in this chapter, that of communicating how they might effectively function at home to support the work of the school in teaching children to read.

CHAPTER VI

LIMITATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Limitations of the Research

This survey has resulted in the identification of several limitations in the research on parent involvement in children's reading. These limitations may have unfortunate implications with respect to the encouragement of future activity in this area. They result from the tendency of researchers in general to confine the evaluation of parent involvement in reading to the singular objective, increase in reading gains, and in many cases from an attempt of activity in the field to emphasize implementation of university-originated research in a public school setting. Since educational practice often receives direction and guidance from the findings of research in the field, factors associated with the nature of the research, in terms of its objective, may tend to limit its impact on the recognition of parent involvement effectiveness in reading and on subsequent program development. These limitations may be more easily perceived when this objective is evaluated in the context of a much broader perspective.

First, most of the research, and predominantly, university-oriented research, is concerned with hypothesizing on the effectiveness of parent involvement in reading in terms of measurable objectives. Although this is generally

the nature of university-oriented research, it may explain the preponderance of studies that evaluated parent involvement in reading in terms of whether or not children's reading gains reached significance. In their desire to gather data that would support their hypotheses however, researchers have omitted several other important benefits of parental involvement in reading. While some of these benefits are not necessarily unmeasurable they are less observable than the objective of increasing reading gains. The effects receiving little attention include improvement in children's attitude toward reading, reflected in an increase in children's reading at home and in school; improvement in children's attitude toward school, reflected in their school work habits and behavior; improvement in parent-child relationships; improvement in teacher-child relationships; and improvement in parent-teacher and parent-school relationships, reflected in less criticism of school policies and their implementation.

Second, in asking only whether parent involvement in reading influences children's reading gains, researchers have risked the probability of successful involvement being equated solely with reading gains significance. Implicit in the use of such singular evaluative criteria is the danger that failure of children to achieve the expected reading gains may result in the dismissal of parent involvement in reading as being of little value. However, insignificant reading gains does not mean that the whole exercise can be considered

futile. It has been shown, for example, in the previous paragraph and admissably by a few researchers (Tables 4 and 5) that the criteria for the evaluation of parent effectiveness in reading appears to be broader than whether or not children's reading gains reach significance. Considering the persistence of problems in education in Newfoundland, such as below-average performance in reading and writing, and the large student drop-out rate (despite tremendous improvement in both human and material resources), parent involvement in children's reading may have several implications for the future. For example, at a time when the student drop-out rate has become alarmingly high in Newfoundland and when parents increasingly tend to support their children rather than the school in matters of discipline, if parent involvement in reading results in improving children's classroom behavior, as well as their interest in reading in school, then it may be one avenue leading to the alleviation of these problems. Similarly, the observed benefit of an improvement in children's reading at home as a result of parent involvement seems promising in an era which has seen the displacement of reading in the home by television viewing. Additionally, as parents become knowledgeable about how reading is taught in school they also become more aware of and generally more supportive of what the school is trying to do. Consequently, at a time when public criticism of education increases in proportion to the decrease in the number of parents with children in

school, results which show that parent involvement in reading blunts public criticism of education would appear to be important. For these reasons, then, parent involvement in reading should not be susceptible to failure by subjecting evaluation of its effectiveness to such limiting criteria as reading gains alone.

Third, in measuring the effectiveness of parent involvement in reading in terms of reading gains that resulted when parents were given information about reading or when parents used a particular program at home, researchers appeared to be more concerned with the product than with the process itself. That is, the actual "parent-helping-child" experience at home and the various environmental factors influencing the effectiveness of this experience, received little attention. For example, the mere fact of obtaining eager parents and providing them with a program to use at home does not of itself ensure improvement in children's reading. Factors related to the attitude of parents toward reading, toward the child's reading, and to other parent-child relationships may be so complex as to nullify the efforts of parents to improve the child's reading. Reading gains would not then become evident until the inhibiting factors are identified and controlled.

It was pointed out in Chapter I, for example, that when the efforts of parents to help children at home are not congruent with the school's efforts, severe frustration may be expected for both children and parents. This situation

may even be more serious, particularly for those children achieving below grade level in reading and for those children receiving small group remedial reading instruction in school. The Haringey Reading Project in Britain found, for example, that students who received extra small-group instruction from an experienced teacher showed no improvement and, in one case, after a year of extra teaching, were significantly worse. The reasons for this, it found, were critically important - that for some children in the infant and early junior school there is a mismatch between learning at school and activity at home. From the home visits circumstances could be seen which were easily rectified which in no way could have been reached by a teacher who did not have collaborative contact with parents. Extra teaching at school, it claimed, in the face of such problems, could well attenuate rather than alleviate the symptoms of growing disinterest in learning to read (Pettit, 1981).

The phenomenal success of the studies in this survey categorized as Group Guidance not only substantiate the findings of the Haringey Reading Project but also progress one step farther to point to the results when inhibiting factors in the home environment are identified and subsequently controlled. Of the seven studies in this category five included remedial reading instruction classes running concurrently with a parent counselling program. In one other study parents were provided with information about how to help with reading skills at home, along with

individual counselling, while in another study parents were provided with counselling conferences only. The reading gains reported in all seven studies reached significance except for the study reported by Suedermeyer (1971) and the study involving counselling conferences only, reported by Craig (1968) (Table 4). Additionally, most of these studies reported improved parent attitude changes toward the child, toward reading, and toward participation (Table 5).

In concentrating on providing parents with materials they could use at home to improve children's reading, much of the research in this review, except the Group Guidance studies, failed to include "collaborative contact" with parents to determine how factors related to the process of parent involvement might have affected their attempts to help their children. Considering that the subjects involved in the studies other than Group Guidance were predominantly experiencing reading difficulties (eight studies involved children receiving small-group instruction and a further fourteen studies involved underachievers in reading) a concentration on the product, in terms of reading gains, without the necessary attention to the factors affecting the process of parental help at home, may be considered a significant limitation of these studies.

Another limitation of the research seems to be inadequate attention to parental perceptions with respect to the benefits of becoming involved. In only one study (Waters, 1967) was this goal clearly defined - to ascertain

the opinions of the participating parents concerning the benefits obtained from the workshop program. Several studies were concerned with changing parental attitudes but only a few planned to assess this change using pre-and post-attitude surveys. Besides, these attitude surveys would not necessarily reveal explicitly whether parents considered the exercise one they would want to through again. Likewise, several studies made provisions for questionnaires to parents but the purpose for these was not indicated in the programs' goals. Maybe this explains why few investigators reported these questionnaire results in systematic fashion. Most investigators relied on parental comments in reporting parents' opinions, as if an afterthought.

Much has been written about the potential of parents in helping children read. However, the difference between potential involvement and actual involvement revolves around the crucial questions of whether parents want to become involved and whether they think being involved has been a fruitful experience for both themselves and their children. The answer to the first question was provided in Chapter I, that parents do indeed want to become involved, and the research reviewed in this survey is generally supportive of this claim. However, the research reviewed in this survey failed to answer the second question in any systematic fashion. Although the question was recognized in the form of parental response through questionnaires these responses

were often reported summarily. Most investigators relied on the subjective comments of the parents involved. While these comments and the questionnaire responses were unanimous with respect to the positive benefits derived from the program by parents, one realization that cannot be overlooked is the fact that parent participation was difficult to encourage and equally difficult to maintain throughout the life of the program. Although the reasons for sporadic attendance may be numerous it probably is the case of parents seeking assurances that participation is effective prior to their becoming involved; hence, the necessity for more effective parent evaluation of their involvement and more systematic reporting of the benefits derived from the program.

One other significant limitation of the activity in the area of parental involvement in children's reading results from a serious lack of attention to the design characteristics of empirical research. While on the one hand the studies in this survey suffer from the weakness of evaluating the effectiveness of parental involvement in terms of a single objective, on the other hand many studies (the eleven projects characterized as descriptive studies) failed to include or failed to report any provisions for the statistical analysis of the parental involvement program's effect on its subjects. Except for the use of a questionnaire administered to parents in four of these,

with sparse reporting of their results, the program developers relied heavily on the subjective comments of the parents involved.

It may be considered ironic that in such a comparatively new area as parental involvement in children's reading, program developers, while considering this area important enough to undertake such projects and to contemplate describing them in professional journals, presumably to demonstrate their value, failed to include provisions for the most persuasive information of all, the measurement of their effect on children and parents. Two of these eleven projects were Title I, federally funded programs (Table 2), which generally were not required to account for the effective disbursement of funds. However, some were university-oriented projects and some were in the nature of pilot projects, including such innovative projects as a summer reading program and a children's book course for parents. Some accountability for the amount of effort expended in the form of the program's effect on children and/or parents should have been included.

Suggestions For Further Study

1. The objectives of further research in the area of parent involvement in children's reading should be less confining. Consideration should be given to measuring the other observed benefits besides reading gains, such as improvement in children's attitudes toward reading,

improvement in children's behavior in school, improvement in parent-child, teacher-child, parent-teacher and parent-school relationships. Until parent involvement in reading has been adequately evaluated in terms of these objectives its potential will remain unknown.

2. The scope of future activity in this area of study, especially where underachievers in reading or children experiencing reading difficulty are involved, should be broadened to include "collaborative contact" with parents for the purpose of determining the presence of factors in the home environments which may be adversely affecting children's reading difficulties. Until such factors are effectively controlled or corrected, any form of parental home help, as well as extra help in school, may even aggravate these reading difficulties.
3. The goals of future research in parental involvement in reading should address the assessment of the benefits derived, as perceived by the parents themselves.
4. The fact that eleven of the forty studies included in this review failed to include provisions for evaluating experimentally the effect of parent involvement in helping children read is a serious weakness of the research. Future activity should follow the adoption of a recognized model in research design to include built in evaluation of what the program attempted to accomplish.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A

Techniques Employed by Investigators to
Encourage Parents to Participate

1. After the program had been planned it was presented to parents at scheduled PTA meetings.
2. Parents were selected from established pre-school and nursery school programs.
3. Homeroom mothers were asked to contact other mothers for the purpose of scheduling meetings to explain the program.
4. Interested mothers assigned blocks in their school district to themselves and each made a personal call on every family in her assigned block, inviting parents to a planned program. A bulletin was left at the home if parents were out.
5. Parents were invited to meetings or sessions through the use of the telephone, newspaper, radio and television.
6. Surveys were conducted asking parents whether they felt confident enough to tutor their children in reading.
7. Principals sent home letters of invitation to parents of school children to attend a scheduled "orientation session".
8. Parents were required to respond "yes" or "no" on a form from the principal asking whether or not they would participate in learning how they could help their children with reading.
9. Meetings designed for the purpose of explaining the program to parents or for the purpose of showing parents how to help their children in reading were scheduled at daytime or evening to accommodate parents who worked shifts.
10. Babysitting services were made available to parents who wanted to attend meetings.

11. Other investigators invited all the children in the family to the orientation sessions to eliminate the need for babysitters.
12. Transportation was provided on request.
13. Meetings were held at convenient locations, sometimes in parents' homes, to make the project less school oriented and to give it a feeling of community ownership. This helped to remove the school from its usual dominant role.
14. Letters of invitation avoided the term meeting, using instead such terms as "orientation sessions". Insultative language was avoided. Invitations were worded in such a way as to assume that parents would participate, rather than giving them a choice.
15. Sustained parental attendance was encouraged through such motivating techniques as:
 - activity oriented sessions for children, including "choral reading" and "reading parties",
 - monthly calendars and stickers, plus certificates and awards for children who complete the required number of weekly reading materials at home,
 - parental recording of children's response to the materials sent home for use with their children, and
 - trophies loaned to the class with the highest number of mothers in attendance.



